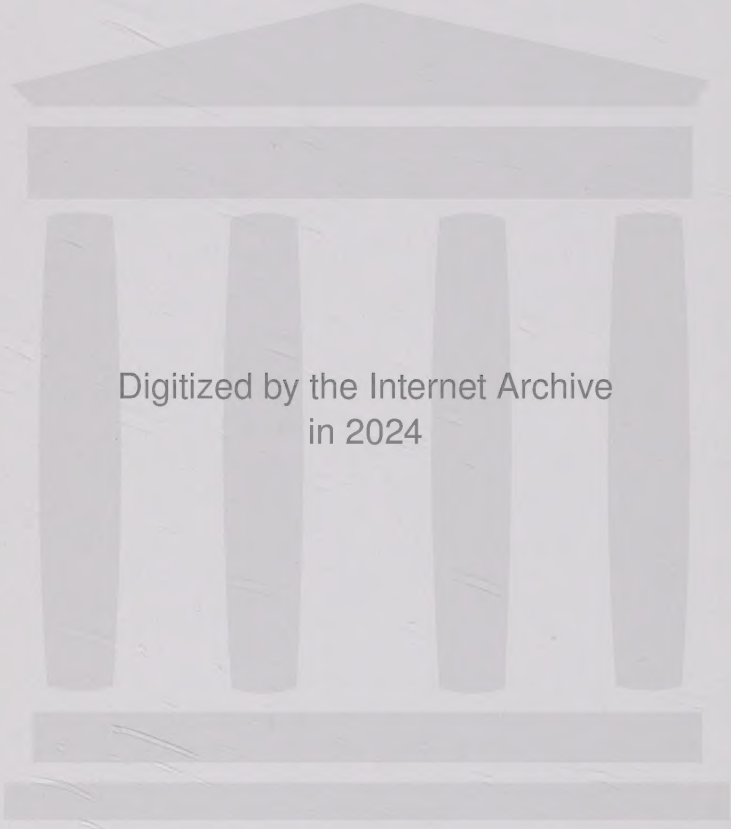
WITHDRAWN

THE TIGER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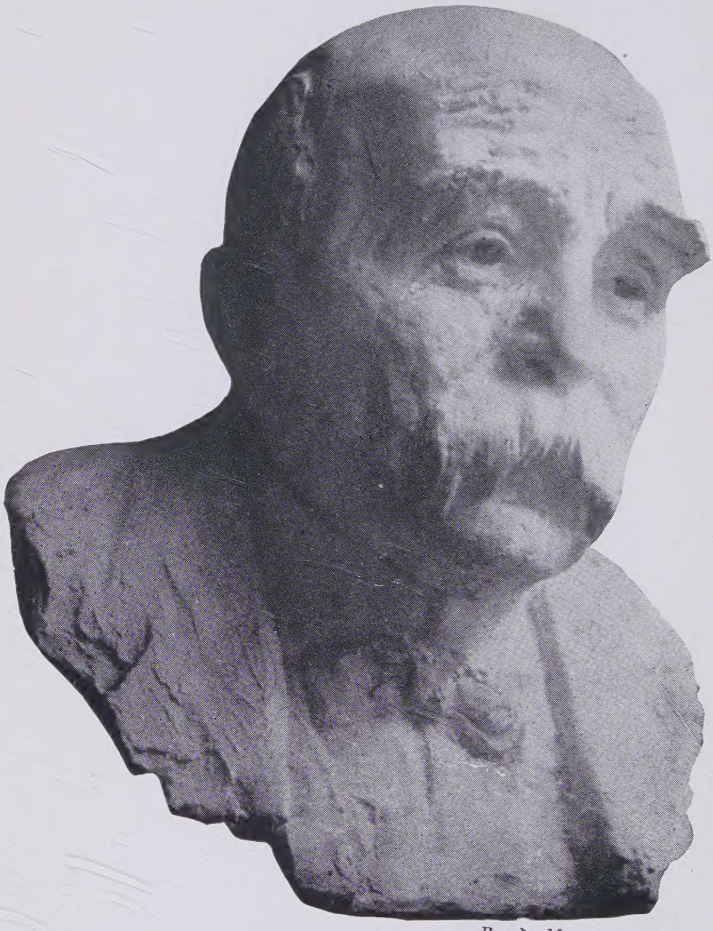

Bernès, Marouteau et Cie

CLEMENCEAU, 1919
From a bust by Jo Davidson

WITHDRAWN

THE TIGER

GEORGES CLEMENCEAU

1841–1929

by

GEORGE ADAM

HARCOURT, BRACE AND COMPANY

NEW YORK

[redacted]

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THE TIGER

I. THE JUNGLE OF HISTORY

"Gaetana," a dull play by that eminently dull author, Edmond About, was produced at the Odéon Theatre in 1862, when there was still a real Latin Quarter, whose youthful inhabitants still wore fantastically baggy breeches patterned with large checks, smoked long cherry-wood pipes, and tried hard to convince themselves that they were part of Murger's "Scènes de la Vie de Bohème." In addition to such bohemians, whose excuse for enjoying life was found in the study of art, there were also large numbers of more serious young men at work upon medicine, philosophy, and political science who found, in opposition to authority, as youth has always done, their most satisfactory method of self-expression. They were not only against the Government, but were also against the régime. They wanted a Republic instead of an Empire. They declaimed it in verse, they shouted it in song. "Ah, que la République était belle sous l'Empire!"

Edmond About was not really a politician, but he had shaken the hand of a man who supported the Empire, Francisque Sarcey, and had worn knee-breeches at the Court of the Tyrant. As he was also devoid of any sense of humour the Republican quarter could not

resist the temptation of having a night's fun at the expense of the unfortunate playwright, and also of throwing a little more ridicule upon the hated Napoleon. Immediately the curtain rose on the first night the actors' words were drowned by cat-calls and hisses. Nevertheless, the five acts were performed, more or less in dumb show. Every night the piece was staged there was further rioting, and one cold Sunday in January a delegation of students summoned the director of the State theatre to withdraw the play. The Empire having refused to capitulate to this cool demand, on Monday there was such disorder that the curtain had to be lowered and the theatre evacuated half-way through the performance. Bands of victory-flushed students spent the night ironically serenading the unhappy About. Not content with this demonstration, a few score of them, boiling over with the revolutionary spirit that destroyed the Bastille, arranged to hold a meeting in favour of the Republic. The evening ended with a few heads being broken, and a few arrests being made.

Among those seized by the police was Georges Clemenceau, medical student, twenty years of age, who made his first appearance in public life when he passed through the gates of Mazas jail. There for over two months he was able to reflect upon the folly of proclaiming a Republic when an Empire still existed. The building of that jail was begun in 1841. In the same year the remains—the famous "cendres"—of the great Napoleon finally reached the Invalides; Victor Hugo, the sentimental humbug of politics and letters, was, by his election to the French Academy, declared to be immortal;

and in a mean little village of La Vendée, in a house which is now the bakery of Mouilleron-en-Pareds, Georges Clemenceau was born.

With most great men it is comparatively easy, by selecting some actions or characteristics, and by rejecting others, to build up a consistent edifice of their lives, and to find arguments in favour of heredity and environment. This process is particularly easy in the case of Clemenceau from the hereditary point of view. He came of a long line of doctors, the first of whom was an apothecary in the seventeenth century. He had in his veins the red blood of revolution, and among his ancestors was Larevellière-Lépeaux, who, as a member of the Convention, voted for the death sentence on the King, and played his part in stamping out the Royalist rising in La Vendée. Georges Clemenceau's father, Benjamin, was a philosophical Jacobin, and detested only one thing more than Louis-Philippe, and that was Napoleon III. He spent more time in cursing Bourbons and Bonapartes than in curing patients.

So much for heredity; but Georges Clemenceau was more than the consistent son of his father. His philosophy and his acts were more than once in strange contradiction. There is always a temptation to seek the source of a man's action, when it cannot be found in tradition, in some intricate process of cold reasoning. Impulsive, reflective; savage and tender; cynic and seer; he was all these, but he never was a coldly reasoning man. Consistency is, after all, nothing but a kind of vision of morality seen in perspective, and it is usually the last thing to worry a great mind. Most of the big decisions

of Clemenceau's life were made for him by events. With great men, words and deeds are usually instinctive—the jerking of a mental or an emotional reflex. It is only with mere politicians that they are the outcome of a calculating opportunism which seizes the chance of slipping in and out of the market of public opinion with immediate profit. There are many things in Clemenceau's life which call for explanation, and some which need excuse. Both can perhaps be found in the history of his days.

When he was born there was no telegraph line in France. Chateaubriand was still flirting with a recumbent Récamier. Balzac was still dodging his creditors. Chopin and Georges Sand were tearing the fragments of themselves and their passions to tatters. Femmes-de-chambre and Marquises were gorging upon the works of their "horrible M. Eugène Sue." Renan, Lamartine, Alexandre Dumas, De Musset, Scribe, Rachel, Daumier, Taglioni, Baudelaire, Victor Hugo, Comte, Taine, Berlioz, and Gavarni, were among those who made up Tout-Paris. The American Civil War and the Crimean came in the next decade. Neither Germany nor Italy had achieved national unity. The first railway system in France was inaugurated in the year of his birth.

Wagner was quarrelling in Paris with Rossini and Meyerbeer when Clemenceau was a school-fellow of Jules Verne at Nantes. Liszt's *Mass* and Verdi's *Trovatore* were not heard until he had come of age. Anatole France, Clemenceau's junior by three years, was then looking after the bookshop of his father, M. Thibaut, on the Quai Voltaire. Cora Pearl ruled over a hemisphere.

Sarah Bernhardt was already looked upon as worthy of encouragement by the autocrats of the Café Anglais, where the cosmopolitan bucks of Clemenceau's young manhood met to dine and gossip.

All the dull inanity of His Most Bourgeois Majesty, Louis-Philippe, had vanished overnight in 1848. It is difficult, even for the most constitutional monarchs, to remain upon their thrones if they are more stupid than the most stupid of their subjects. The Second Republic, of which the exact whereabouts has always bewildered the schoolboy, had but a brief existence, and transformed itself into a shop-window Empire, which, although it was as wrong-headed as the amorphous thing it replaced, was certainly anything but dull. All the magnificence of the period could not reconcile French youth to the fact that it was not allowed to laugh at authority. One of many differences between French and English people is, that if you deny the right of public meeting to the latter, they will tear down the railings of Hyde Park, while in France no such right has ever been claimed or granted; but if in France you attempt to muzzle the chansonnier and control the journalist and the caricaturist, there will be a revolution. This Napoleon-Badinguet endeavoured to do, and the first breath of trouble blew him to pieces. He left the road free for the short-lived Commune, and the more lasting republican régime of the present day.

It might well be argued that Clemenceau remained throughout the events of his life the one consistent factor in a world of changing forces. He was born under the influence of the Great Revolution—did he not know and admire in the flesh Joseph Cormier, who had been a

friend of Marat? Did he not live under one Monarchy, an Empire, two Republics, and a Commune? He was not alone, but was certainly in a minority, in hoping that the Revolution did not come to an end when it put the *grande bourgeoisie* in the place of the *haute aristocratie*. Undoubtedly this hope, nay, this conviction, formed the very core of his being. The other great force behind him was that sense of patriotism which, among the French, as among other essentially peasant people, started with a desire to put walls around the farm, and ended in the erection of elaborate fortresses along the national frontier.

Clemenceau had many mean and splendid sins upon his soul. He had to account for many men shot, not in the heat of battle, but in the cold dawn of calm. He was brutal, cynical, and ruthless, and paid full toll to those reasons of State which only resemble charity in the number of sins they cover. But when he settled himself serenely in his shroud, he could think of all his century of confused history, of young Mary Plummer of Connecticut, of the Commune, of the great days of Panama and Dreyfus, when he saved the Republic; of his titanic effort during the Great War, of the lilies flaming into life and burning to their death upon Claude Monet's ponds at Giverny, and in his fading consciousness he was at least entitled to feel that he had been not only a great Frenchman, but a great Man.

II. THE CUB

Clemenceau was always bored by researches into the history of his family. The patient, and frequently ill-directed, efforts of folk to prove they came of ancient stock, roused his contempt. When he was told that the first trace of a Clemenceau was one Jehan who was a printer and bookseller at Poitiers at the end of the fifteenth century, he impatiently suggested that, after all was said and done, we all belonged to the same family: the family of mankind. Yet this revolutionary stock of his was faithfully observant of tradition. Madame Benjamin Clemenceau, for the birth of her first son, Georges, obeyed the local custom by returning to the house of her father. On that house the municipality has placed a tablet as a sign of "its pride in its illustrious compatriot, the organiser of victory, the liberator of the country, to whom goes up with daily growing fervour the gratitude of France." In this green-shuttered house, which is now the village bakery, young Georges Clemenceau spent his childhood's holidays, roaming the Vendée of his origin with an ever alert eye and a quick, responsive mind.

During those holidays he got to know every corner of the countryside, and, as a round-cheeked, rather grave

little boy, he began that exploration of life which as an old man he knew to be life itself. He was often accompanied by his father on these rambles. The old Jacobin and the youngster were a strongly contrasted couple—the old father, dour, dark, and almost savage, with the austere, bitter classicism of the Revolution; and the boy, full of youth's naïve wonder, already puzzling as to why and how. The grim parent showed already in his face the spirit of struggle which later dominated the boy's whole existence. He was of the race of that old Voltairian of the Vendée, Dr. Jean du Pouët, who summoned his "inseparable enemy," the Curé Jaud, to his deathbed. The infidel doctor had always hoped to die before the Curé, for he had gleefully planned to force Mother Church to a great act of hypocrisy. So in his will he declared that he died an absolute unbeliever, that he desired to be buried in the suicides' corner of the churchyard, and that he left his fortune, amounting to a hundred thousand francs, for the adornment of the church of Ecoulandres, in the hope that the contrast between the luxury of the Church and their own wretchedness would arouse appropriate feelings of resentment in the hearts of his fellow-citizens. In the event of this bequest being refused the estate was to pass into the hands of Freemasonry for anti-clerical propaganda.

This might very well have been Dr. Benjamin. The son, some eighty years later, stood in the courtyard of his flat in the rue Franklin at Passy, saying good-bye to a young clerical visitor. The youthful priest, fallen under the glamour of Georges Clemenceau's fame, warmed by the fire of his patriotism, deeply moved by his humane

philosophy, could not believe it possible that such a man could be an atheist.

"But surely," he said pleadingly, "you must believe in God?"

"And you, Monsignor?" came the questioning reply.

As a boy he lived in an atmosphere of conflict which coloured his whole life. La Vendée suffered more terribly from the Revolution and its aftermath than did many other parts of France. His youth was spent in the atmosphere of village squabbles, envenomed to an extraordinary degree by the still living memory of those bitter days of civil warfare. Such memories could not have much active influence upon him until his youth was merging into manhood, when he first became aware that tyranny and injustice still were all-powerful. The family settled at Nantes, but it was his holiday rambles as a boy in La Vendée that made the deepest impression upon his mind—an impression so deep that half a century afterwards the stories of the people of that countryside came to life again under his pen. They are curious tales, tolerantly told, of dark, harsh people, clustered around the Church, school, and Mairie, the notary's and the cemetery, which for hundreds of years have been the boundary posts of existence in a "petit pays." A French village, with its genial courtesies, laughing children, smell of bread, clatter of talk around the fountain, its thrift and its labour, is charming in its rustic simplicity. The youngster knew and loved all that outward smiling face, but, already as a boy a friend of spirits in revolt, he was groping for the tragedy that always lies behind the smiling mask. His first revolu-

tionary friend was a very mild enemy of society, a locally famed poacher, Janière, who was, indeed, the friend of all the world, with the professional exception of the gamekeepers. Clemenceau honestly admitted later on in life that all that years of revolution had achieved in the domain of game preservation had been the replacing of feudal rights of birth by the equally objectionable feudal rights of money; the nature-wise poacher who does not get found out by authority remains throughout France something of a hero in his countryside.

As a boy, too, he won the favours of Fleur de Froment, whose clear white complexion was covered with the gold dust of the sun. She was the belle of the village, the bergère who has inspired so many charming French songs, both proper and improper. She was proud of her red-bronze hair. She knew herself that she was good-looking, and every young fellow she met told her so, including Georges Clemenceau, in whom she aroused the devout feeling that she was a "glow of golden bronze dancing over ripened wheat." Attended by her mongrel dog, "Red Legs," she would sit in the shade with her faithful swain, and, while her herd was straying on to other people's property, he talked of his winter at Nantes, of his studies, and her eyes opened wide in peasant-girl astonishment at all the wonders of book-learning. Clemenceau, of all the youths in her train, was preferred. To him she would give her rosy lips. For him she sang at harvest dances, in her fresh young voice, the songs written in her honour by a lovelorn village bard. There was no harm in all their kissing, for, while Fleur de Froment was a comely and grown maid of

twenty, Clemenceau was but rising seven. Another plucked the wheaten flower, and, after the rude custom of La Vendée peasantry, threshed it with a flail so heavy that, when an old walnut-faced woman tried to sing again to him the verses of Fleur de Froment, with a memory of hot afternoons spent in the ripening fields half a century before with a small but impressively learned boy, she could only say, "Flower of the Wheat! There's nothing left now but damaged straw! You, Monsieur, who know everything, will you tell me why we live?" And Clemenceau could find no answer.

Those vagabond holidays in La Vendée gave him a deep knowledge of the motives which actuate men and women, of whatever creed or climate. Local characters were as plentiful as in any Highland glen. There were plausible old scoundrels, such as Jean Piot, who, thanks to an unexpected windfall, entertained the whole village to a Bacchanalian revel before going back to his trade as a beggar; the rich and virtuous people of good family, whose sense of Christian pity would have made the bravest-hearted lion slink from any Roman arena—a diversity of creatures which Clemenceau later described with the insight of a Balzac.

But, with a Jacobin father, opportunities of roaming the "bocage" grew rapidly less frequent. The education of real discipline awaited Georges at the Nantes Lycée where he did not particularly distinguish himself. In fact, learning as such never made much appeal to him. He was a good average schoolboy with a healthy animal dislike for some of the more pretentious and long-winded classical authors he was forced to read. Education

at Nantes, although it produced Jules Verne, does not seem to have run much upon lines of imagination, and when Clemenceau left it to begin his medical studies he was much more under the influence of his father's radical opinion than that of the more widely recognised philosophers of antiquity.

Nantes, throughout the days of Louis-Philippe, the Second Republic, and the Empire, was a rallying-point for those tenacious old men who were determined that the Great Revolution, which was after all part of their direct heritage, should continue in its progress towards the world's social regeneration, and should not be switched off into any Royalist, Imperialist, or purely bourgeois siding.

Those were unhappy days for men who wanted freedom. There was not a town in France without its "tailors of Tooley Street" insisting on their rights. If they had any rights, they were merely theoretical in the eyes of a rigid censorship, which suppressed what they wrote, and of an army of spies who reported what they said. Nantes in those days was, on a smaller scale, the Bristol of France. Hardy adventurers managed to thrive in trading with the French West Indies throughout the wars of the Revolution and the Empire. The Vendée revolt came to the very gates of the city, but still there were fat fortunes in the town, and society was coloured with that freedom which comes from an outlet to another world, whether it be east or west. There were lawyers, scientists, generals, merchants with reticent, calculating eyes, professors, students, and a proud, if defeated, remnant of nobility. All this mixed world strolled up

and down the Place Graslin at the pre-dinner hour consecrated to gossip. There, chez Plançon, at the corner of the rue Jean Jacques Rousseau (the address itself was a programme) Georges Clemenceau, lanky, but already with a firmly sculptured head upon broad shoulders, used to be taken by his father. Doctor Benjamin by that time had abandoned all medical practice, as though, since the body politic had refused to swallow his prescriptions, the physical body could equally do without them. He had even removed the plate from his door, and spent his time in grieving over the stupidity of a world which was not actively republican—which actually arrested him during the Second Empire. Plançon, "a big-hearted fellow with the smile of a child," presided in person over the affairs of his lending library. The premises consisted of a large book-lined corridor, with two windows overlooking the Place Graslin, where could be seen among the promenaders every evening a little tubby man whose face was buried in a growth of prickly white whiskers. He always walked up and down with his hands clasped behind his back, fighting over again that Battle of Waterloo, which with but one word he has made peculiarly his own. Cambronne was, perhaps, the only French soldier who gained, instead of losing, his reputation on that stricken field.

There near the window, perched like a schoolmaster at a desk, Plançon satisfied the romantic literary taste of the young ladies and shop-girls of Nantes. Behind him, and facing the windows opposite the Grand Théâtre, were a few chairs reserved for the elect. They formed the only kind of republican club tolerated by the

police. Plançon always knew things before any one else, and the fact that a thing had been overheard "at Plançon's," gave weight to the flimsiest rumours. Into the circle were admitted all the republican notables of the town. There were Doctor Benjamin Clemenceau, a venturesome merchant or two, an occasional disgruntled officer on retired pay, and red-cheeked, white-bearded M. Joseph Cormier. He was looked upon with considerable reverence, as a survivor of the one and only Revolution, who, moreover, had been a personal friend of Marat.

Prudence was sometimes forgotten in the liveliness of political discussion. Voices were raised, and, whatever other reproaches may be made against the administration of the Second Empire, it must be admitted that its political police did not go about with cotton-wool in its ears. Orsini's attempt to assassinate the Emperor provided the police with sufficient excuse for getting rid of a number of troublesome people throughout France who figured on their lists as disaffected. Doctor Benjamin Clemenceau was denounced as being a revolutionary. He was arrested at the Club, to the consternation of the members, and removed to the town jail. A friend rushed off to tell Madame Clemenceau. She was probably not altogether surprised.

Napoleon III had established a sort of perverted political Christian Science. The soldier who lay dying on the battle-field had to convince himself that "L'Empire, c'est la Paix." The Empire also meant prosperity, laughter and dancing. It was clear that any one as morosely misanthropic as Doctor Clemenceau could

neither laugh nor dance. He must, therefore, be plotting against the State. The unhappy man who had for so long inveighed against tyranny was about to realise that all he had said was true. For a month he remained in jail, while the unquestioned republican cast of his mind and its manifestations were gravely considered by the authorities. There were many vacant chairs chez Plançon in those weeks, but even a tinsel tyrant is foolish when he manufactures martyrs. His wife and children were allowed brief daily interviews with the Doctor through the prison bars, but they came nearer to him when from a friendly window they saw him taking his daily exercise in the company of the regular patrons of the jail. The prisoners, to relieve the tedium of their existence, used to manufacture toys out of the bones of their food, and from sticks. Georges Clemenceau's sisters got into communication from their window with some of these jail-birds, and fished for these prison-made toys, dropping a string, with a few sous tied to the end as ground bait. The toys they hauled up in return were kept as family treasures by the girls.

His father's arrest strengthened the determination of Georges Clemenceau to fight every force or institution which hindered men from speaking or acting in completely secure freedom. At the end of a month it was decreed, without a semblance of trial, that Benjamin Clemenceau should be transported to Algeria, which in those days was far from being a health resort. Even the Clericals and Bonapartists of Nantes were shocked when they heard, no doubt chez Plançon, of the leave-taking between the manacled Doctor and his wife and family.

Madame Clemenceau was in tears of despair. The eldest daughter fell to the ground and lost her speech and memory for several months. Gustave Geffroy of the Académie Goncourt, an ardent friend and supporter of Georges Clemenceau, has given an account of the feeling aroused in Nantes when it heard of the indignities heaped upon a man who, however detestable his political opinions might be, was, nevertheless, an upright, honourable, and considered citizen.

The Doctor travelled from Nantes to Marseilles in a convict compartment and handcuffed. His cell was so narrow that when he arrived at Marseilles the constant rubbing of his knees against the door had worn away his best trousers and produced great sores. Similar, and in some cases worse, treatment was the fate of his fellow-travellers on the road to exile. Their common suffering did but strengthen the political links between them, and many of them met again in Paris in defending the barricades of the Commune. Arthur Ranc, who was perhaps the most notable of these political prisoners, long before the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War had become a mentor to Georges Clemenceau, and they lived side by side during the provisional Government and the Commune which followed Sedan.

The Breton is a slow, ruminating man, but when he starts trouble it is usually wise to attend to him. Benjamin Clemenceau got as far as Marseilles before the growing agitation aroused by his case in Nantes showed the tinsel tyrant the wisdom of yielding. The old Doctor returned from Marseilles, moved neither to gratitude for the clemency shown him, nor to anger by the harshness

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of the treatment he had suffered. When he was starting on his penal journey, only two faithful friends had the courage to bid him farewell. When they had gone, his son Georges, white with anger, slipped up to him and whispered, "I'll avenge you." His father replied, with some of the stoicism he so much admired in antiquity, "If you want to avenge me, work." The happy return of the father made such an immediate filial sacrifice of a lad's leisure unnecessary. The family had taken a château at Les Aubraies, which was a far more baronial property than the bakery at Mouilleron. Georges spent all his spare time there, wandering the countryside with his father, and driving his sisters on a round of visits to family friends and relations in the neighbourhood. The growing *malice* of his mind found much amusement in these meetings with parvenu and decayed nobility, but he was infinitely more interested in the folk of the land, and in his father's philosophical disquisitions upon the evolution of nature.

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III. ON THE THRESHOLD

Then came the moment which has been decisive in the lives of many French provincial youngsters. When Clemenceau was nineteen his father sent him to Paris to complete his medical studies.

It is quite possible that the Commander-in-Chief of the Swiss Army is a finer military genius than Caesar, Napoleon, and Foch rolled into one. It seems unlikely, however, that he will ever have an opportunity of proving his capacity on such a scale. Clemenceau, without the opportunities of his times, might easily have gone down to history as a somewhat mangy and toothless old man-eating Tiger, of more nuisance than importance to the community.

He was installed in his quarters in the rue de l'Estrapade just when the gay vie de Bohème which had been the inevitable reaction against the great Napoleon's preference for artillery officers and engineers was dying down. The iron ruler of Haussmann was wiping out the picturesque, narrow, mediaeval streets where youth, instead of being hurried off, as "Marie-Louises," to die in the snows of Russia, had had time to kick up its heels in every kind of prank, and, in the full enjoyment of life and of art, pay to Venus, inadequately represented by a

grisette, the toll of youth which a previous generation had sacrificed to Mars. While there was still a lot of genuine fun and frolic left there were sets of men, particularly among the republicans, who flirted not with Lisette but with the rights of man; and, instead of writing sonnets to their ladies' eyes, expended their energy in lampooning the Empire.

Anatole France, in describing the siege of Orleans, says that the people of Orleans feared God greatly, and adds that God made himself feared in those days. Clemenceau soon joined up with the young element which took itself seriously, and the times were indeed serious. Although far from living as an austere monk, he was not a prominent frequenter of the student cafés of the period, such as the Brasserie Andler, where painters gathered round Courbet and Corot, or even of the Coucou, the rendezvous of his friends Zola and Goncourt. His favourite meeting-place was the studio of Delestre, where the air was heavy with conspiracy.

At Delestre's his extreme opinions exerted a considerable influence on the minds of the youngsters who gathered around him, and it was with a few of the friends he made there that Georges Clemenceau drew up and signed his first political manifesto. It was a ridiculous document, showing in every word how completely without sense of humour youth can be when it is first trying to construct a political programme. Its signatories declared that they felt it to be their duty "to deny in practice what they rejected in principle, and to bind themselves to oppose the presence of a priest at birth, marriage, or death." They therefore formed a "Do-as-

you-think-association," which had "Science as its law, and justice as its aim." Curiously enough this pompous document was to play a part years afterwards in Clemenceau's marriage troubles.

Once a French student has signed a manifesto his next step, unless supplies are cut off from home, is to found a newspaper. This Clemenceau did within two years of his arrival in the quarter. *Le Travail* started him upon his career as a fighter; and characteristically, throughout his life, he never thought of a newspaper except as a weapon. "You never know," he said, "what will happen to a man who has some notion of his interests, and a gun." In his hands a newspaper was a gun. From the Revolution he inherited a thoroughly pugnacious vocabulary, and the metaphors of both his writings and his speeches are mainly drawn from terms of war. This first journalistic venture was launched in 1862 by a group of youngsters recruited mainly from the frequenters of Delestre. Its first number appeared at the close of 1862, and, owing to rigid police control, all its political action had to be exerted obliquely through articles dealing with history, art, literature, and science.

Zola was the poet of the paper. Méline and many other men who were afterwards found in the forefront of the Republican party, began as youthful skirmishers in the columns of *Le Travail*. Clemenceau, as its literary and dramatic critic, had a wide scope. Any one favoured by the Empire was his enemy. He succeeded, by the violence of his attack upon Edmond About's *Gaetana*, in giving himself a place in the public eye. Most of his early articles are, however, but poor copy when com-

pared with his later work. He was still finding his way, blazing his trail. His most important political contribution to *Le Travail* was a review of Michelet's *History of France*, in which he protested against the theory of Thiers and Guizot that history was made by inherent fatality, and owed nothing to the will and action of man. Old age in no way sanctioned despotism. Thus, despite the camouflage of censorship, Clemenceau found the means of saying that the mere existence of the Second Empire gave it no right to persist in existing.

Even language so disguised was fairly strong for the times, but it was the attack on About that brought matters to a head. About had bowed the knee in breeches before the Tyrant of the Tuileries! In times of oppression, anything, even knee-breeches, will do as a flag. When *Gaetana* was performed the editorial staff of *Le Travail* usually spent the night in jail, and had to find another and more republican printer for the next issue. After eight weeks' hectic existence the paper was suppressed, and in saying good-bye to his readers, Clemenceau sounded the battle-motif which throbs in every deed and word of his thereafter. "They can force us to conceal our thoughts," he wrote, "but not to disguise them. They can silence us, but they cannot make us lie. They may say that we shall come to grief upon the rocks. I say that we will break down all obstacles. We are here to fight. When we said we were going to revolt, we did not mean to do so with folded arms. We are strong, because we are fighting for our ideal."

Clemenceau, relating his experiences after his arrest, says that he spent seventy-three days in jail solely because

he proclaimed the Republic nine years before it came into being. The humour of fate so arranged matters that he later became a member of the Prison Control Committee. "I have often heard," he said, "the director of our penitentiaries boast in emotional tones of the benefits of the cell system. This official even went, at the tax-payers' expense, to repeat his idiotic remarks in St. Petersburg, Rome, and I don't know where else, to other philanthropists as ignorant as he of the appalling work they were doing with a glad heart. Sometimes I wanted to tell these pensioned and honoured men, happy in their old age, that they were a set of outrageous torturers; but such was the impassive beatitude of their faces, that one day, feeling the complete uselessness of such protest, I left the Committee and never went back."

There was no particular fun in being a political prisoner of the Empire. Clemenceau glowed with heroism when proclaiming the Republic, but felt that there should be a limit to the sufferings of political martyrs. When he reached Mazas prison, he was taken to a cell where a newly-arrested thief was trying to cleanse his person in a bath filled with coffee-coloured water. Enlightened prison reformers insisted in the regulations upon each fresh arrival taking a bath, but Clemenceau discovered that they had unfortunately failed to make their hygienic intentions quite clear, and when the wallowing thief had left the muddy liquid considerably darker after his ablutions, Clemenceau was ordered to immerse himself in the same water. He demurred, and his guardians very courteously begged him to save them the necessity of taking him by his head

and his heels and plunging him into the mixture. Eventually he made a bargain with his warders, and was allowed to dirty only his feet in the water. "I was only in Mazas for seventy-three days," he says, "but I feel that I was bored for seventy-three years. I started by denying the paternity of a proclamation which from start to finish was written in my hand; at the end of three days I was ready to confess to any crime in the calendar, if by so doing I could shorten my sufferings. They kept me waiting for a month before examining me. On my way to the magistrate, I had a charming trip in Black Maria, seated on the knees of a butcher's boy who had murdered one of his friends. Before I was even questioned, I told the judge everything."

Clemenceau's boredom groans aloud in every word of his recollections. His chief reading matter consisted of the printed prison regulations, which ended by reminding the unhappy inmate of a cell that his guardian angel was still with him, and presumably also locked up. "Unhappy guardian angel!" Clemenceau exclaimed, "it is perhaps only right that he should be punished for having so badly looked after his man!" From the prison library he was allowed a restricted choice of books, mainly of a pious nature. And at first he was given a poem in twelve cantos on M. de Jumonville, a young French officer who was killed on the banks of the Ohio, fighting with Washington's militia. For two whole days Clemenceau tried to plough through this poetic effusion, and nearly lost his reason in the process. Eventually he had M. de Jumonville's remains removed. "I was saved," he said, "and I have never since been able to

get rid of an invincible feeling of resentment against Washington."

On his release from jail, Clemenceau plunged back, but only for a vivid moment, into Latin Quarter politics. He had for some time been an admirer of that veteran conspirator, Blanqui, and now, although Blanqui himself was in jail, Clemenceau began to plot with and for him. He ran a secret press for his leader, and transmitted to him a proposal which had as its object nothing less than the kidnapping of the Emperor himself. Most real conspirators are prudent men; they have to be. Blanqui distrusted the impetuousness which led to the forming of any such plan, and Clemenceau found it convenient, perhaps thanks to the cold water of Blanqui's disapproval, or perhaps to the effect of his foot-bath in Mazas, to devote himself to the real purpose for which he was in Paris, which, after all, was not so much the overthrow of the Empire as the taking of his medical degree.

This he achieved in 1865. Apart from a little electioneering doctoring done at Montmartre, he never really practised. He was too philosophically political to make a good general practitioner, or even a real man of science. Even his qualifying thesis upon the origins of life was based upon a theory of generation which has several times since been utterly discredited. In fact, his thesis is more interesting as a profession of faith than as a contribution to science. In it he declared that, although it was possible that research might acquire some precise knowledge as to the origins of life, "the primal source will never be discovered, for the simple reason that there is not one."

During this period of eclipse, others carried on the revolutionary fight. All sorts of exciting things were happening. Sarah Bernhardt made her début at the Comédie Française. Ingres, of all people in the world, was made a Senator. The foundation-stone of the new Opéra was laid. The first number of *La Vie Parisienne*, dear to all dug-out dwellers of the Great War, made its appearance with Hippolyte Taine, a Professor of Philosophy, as its chief contributor! The Emperor was busy receiving Japanese and Annamite ambassadors, as well as the offer of that ill-fated Mexican throne, on behalf of Maximilian. The Empress Eugénie was able to carry off to general admiration a head-dress of sea-weed, and a gown which made of her "a mermaid who had just left her wave."

Just when Clemenceau, having walked his hospitals and taken his full degree, might have been expected to settle down in practice, he suddenly, and rather against his father's will, decided to travel. He went first of all to England, and then to America. In his salad days the young doctor was a Positivist, and, although his courage carried him further later on, when in England he naturally sought out John Stuart Mill (whose work upon Comte he translated), Frederic Harrison, and the less precise Herbert Spencer. His stay in England was short, so short indeed that it left no philosophical, nor even sentimental, memories behind it. He pushed on to America, then in the throes of civil war. From New York he contributed a number of letters to *Le Temps*, in which, despite heavy sub-editorial censorship, his former ardour for republican institutions occasionally flickers.

Commenting upon the election of General Grant, he used a phrase which, for years afterwards, provided him with a slogan. "The Republican victory," he wrote, "is dazzling and decisive. It provides a sure guarantee that reaction will not rule, and that the blacks will not be left to the mercy of their former masters. Of her slaves America means to make, and will make, citizens and free men (*hommes libres*)."

Clemenceau was a witness of the last battles of the American Civil War, and fifty-two years afterwards, addressing the American troops which had carried Belleau Wood, in his clipped and precise English, he said, "I have for long admired American institutions, and know them well. I was in your country during the last days of the Civil War, and was in Richmond five minutes before General Grant captured the town." This final success it was that enabled General Grant, as Republican President, to promise to make of all Americans free men. The paper in which Clemenceau fought Germany until national peril placed him in power was, perhaps thanks to some unconscious turn of thought, entitled *L'Homme Libre*.

Clemenceau's fervour for a republican France was eclipsed by the interest he took in the new, strange life he found around him in America. Bitten perhaps by the dollar-bug, he tried to settle there permanently, and asked his father for the capital necessary to start him in business. Old Doctor Benjamin, against whose wishes Georges Clemenceau had gone to the United States, replied by cutting off all supplies, even his allowance. Clemenceau did not easily give in to this economic

pressure, and eked out a varied and exiguous budget as a teacher of French history and literature at a Seminary for Young Ladies in Connecticut.

When a tiger, if only a cub, is let loose in a sheep-fold, the results are not difficult to foresee. Mary Plummer and Georges Clemenceau both have reason to think with some bitterness of the fate which threw them together, and made the girl listen to the romantic philosophy of a young Frenchman, who, if not a Greek god in beauty, was, nevertheless, a striking-looking man. He had behind him the glamour of the youthful political prisoner and conspirator, and held out the promise of a much more romantic future. They became man and wife, but not without difficulty. Mary was an orphan, but her trustees and guardians were as stern as any parents. They looked with a cold, unfavourable eye upon the enterprising Frenchman. His ways of wooing had been direct, and his ideas of marriage seemed scandalous to New England Puritanism. For Clemenceau remembered the old manifesto he had signed as a student, pledging himself never to have recourse to the offices of the Church at birth, marriage, or death. This was a point of view which Mary's guardians could not possibly accept. They may have understood the character of them both too well to consent to any but the most binding and solemn sacrament. Nevertheless, Clemenceau had his way in this, the first, and by no means the most successful, of his many cutting-out, piratical undertakings.

IV. 1870

While Clemenceau was following the closing stages of the American Civil War, was studying with passion the growth of democratic institutions in the northern States, and laying impetuous siege to the heart of the fair Mary Plummer in the woods of Connecticut, his old enemy, the Emperor, was living in a blaze of glory. From afar the Imperial magnificence of the Tuileries, Chantilly, and Compiègne, must have appeared very dazzling. Hardly a week passed without its solemn reception of Eastern potentates, Arab chieftains, and European monarchs. The Great Exhibition had been a triumph for Paris as the centre of artistic achievement. Immense public works and grandiose schemes of town-planning contributed to the glory of Napoleon III. An old French saying declares that "Quand le bâtiment va, tout va." Taken as an indication of material prosperity, the building trades undoubtedly were booming in those days. People were prosperous, society was becoming reconciled to the Napoleonic régime, the Army was loyal and full of panache. Business, both legitimate and speculative, was well content with the state of affairs. And yet shrewd minds, living close to all this brilliance, saw in it nothing but the incandescence of decay. Saint-

Beuve, who was by no means anti-imperialist, wrote in '69, "Things are going to disappear; they will soon be the sport of circumstance. Don't shake your head or smile and be confident. Every Power which has fallen has done that up to the very eve, nay, the very day of its collapse. The Empire is really stricken. As I like it, and am part of it, you can realise that I am not the last to regret this state of things."

Clemenceau was too wise a man not to see that in political as in spiritual matters a man cannot live by bread alone. He realised how close to the days and traditions of the Great, and still progressing, Revolution, his country stood, and that, to Frenchmen, prosperity without liberty is as dangerous as wealth without health.

During his absence in America, many of the Latin Quarter students with whom he had started his career as a republican fighter had kept their flag flying. In the Provinces, as in the Capital, war between the slavery of thought which the Empire sought to impose on the young generation, and the freedom of expression demanded as a birthright by the republicans, had been waged on the one side by ruthlessly stupid censorship, and on the other with all the envenomed malice of a clandestine press.

It would be historically inaccurate to picture the fall of the Second Empire as having been due entirely to the Franco-Prussian War. It was fruit rotting on the bough of history. In the early days of 1870, republicans, flushed by success, were already pushing forward to triumph, and at more than one moment in the first two months of the year it looked as though Napoleon were

doomed. Nearly every successful revolution requires at least one martyred corpse. It was a member of the Imperial family who endeavoured to provide this political commodity. He did so in a manner typical of the weak, and yet ferocious, theatricality displayed by so many of the great Napoleon's serio-comic descendants.

Prince Pierre Bonaparte, despite the majestic estimate of his family, had remained a low-class Corsican, with more than his share of his compatriots' clamant savagery. The gates of the Tuileries were closed against him on account of the turbulence of his life, and in attempts to regain imperial favour he was constantly involving himself in violent polemics with republicans (such as Henri Rochefort), from which the régime usually emerged more ridiculous than before. In a delicately worded article, Prince Pierre spoke of Corsica's republicans as being a gang of thieves and traitors with whose entrails he would gladly manure the land (*stenine per le poretti*). Prince Pierre held Rochefort responsible for the battle of words which immediately followed this article, and in a letter, unusual in character from a man acquainted with the duelling code, the Prince insolently asked Rochefort to wait upon him in his house at Auteuil. Unfortunately a youngster seeking fame at the pistol's mouth "jumped the claim," and on his behalf M. Victor Noir and M. de Fonvielle arrived first at Auteuil with the formal mission of asking the Prince to name the traditional two friends of a duel. Victor Noir was a young man with a sense of humour. He looked forward to his call upon the Prince. His old housekeeper, to whom he had jokingly said, "Turn me out well, I am going to call upon a Prince!"

gave an extra polish to his boots and pursued him out of the house with a clothes-brush. A gaily self-important couple of youngsters sent their cards in to the Prince. Five minutes afterwards Noir lay dying in the street, while the Prince, who had received them with his hand upon a loaded pistol in the pocket of his baggy trousers, was having a second shot at M. de Fonvielle.

News of this outrage reached the Emperor at St. Cloud. He staggered back, livid, and returned to Paris at once, where already the incredible rumour was spreading in the populous Faubourgs, which still were true to their revolutionary reputation. Quick action by the police prevented an outbreak in Paris that very night. Just as hot-heads were working up the mob to march upon Auteuil and bring Victor Noir's body back to his home in the heart of Paris, his remains were secretly taken there by the police, and the newspapers that night received instructions to state that, with the Emperor's approval, immediate proceedings would be begun against the murderer. Victor Noir was buried by the people of Paris, who removed the horses from the funeral coach and dragged it themselves to the grave-side, where speech after speech inflamed the popular anger. Revolt and oppression reacted one upon another with increasing violence. The great mobile fortresses of the street-fighter—the barricades—grew sporadically, like mushrooms, overnight, in more than one city of France. Even the Army muttered against the Emperor.

Then came the Franco-Prussian War, and Paris for a brief spell indulged in an orgy of boasting jingoism. It was very busy for a while fighting Prussia "with its

mouth"; also, ominously for the Empire, by chanting the great anthem of revolt, the *Marseillaise.* Clemenceau was in New York when war broke out, and hurried home. Leaving his bride in Brittany, he hastened to Paris to play his part in the events which immediately followed Sedan.

V. MAYOR OF MONTMARTRE

Paris, brought up on Victor Hugo's romanticism and a Christmas-pantomime training in the grandeur of antiquity, behaved with a naïveté which would have been rather touching and amusing had it not led to disaster. Even the very people who, a few months before, had found nothing but rottenness in the Empire, were overwhelmed by optimism, and very confident that the selfsame régime they had so decried would bring the troops of victorious France to Berlin within six weeks of the opening of hostilities. An enterprising printer advertised a Franco-German dictionary "for the use of French troops in Berlin." Of the charges of corruption brought against the Government, not a word was heard. Confidence in the army and its equipment was complete, and all believed that every pair of gaiters had its last historic button. The French officers started the campaign with excellent maps, unfortunately of the wrong country. On the eve of Sedan, von Moltke said to the unhappy French General Wimpfen, "You don't know the topography of the country round Sedan. May I show you how presumptuous is your country, and how lacking in method? When the war began your officers all had maps of Germany, but they had no means of studying the geog-

raphy of their own country, for they had no maps of France." There were tremendous gaps in the artillery of the French; even mobilisation was a muddle from the start, a muddle reflected in the arrangements made for keeping the public mind in a state of balanced stability.

The slightest little success in a skirmish was magnified before Parisian eyes until it became an almost decisive success; these rumours were immediately given official endorsement, and day after day the victory of the morning had become disaster by night. After six weeks of alternating hope and despair, the staggering news of the capitulation of Sedan reached the capital through the Belgian press. Parliament had decided to hold an all-night sitting to discuss its course of action. The news was not official, and the majority of Parisians did not grasp the full extent of the disaster until wakened by the hoarse shouting of newsboys announcing the surrender of Napoleon.

The serene dawn of a lovely summer's day was soon filled with the tramping of angry citizens on their way to the Chamber of Deputies. At the Palais Bourbon, the hot night had been spent in fruitless, feverish discussion. Already during the night the troops and police had found it difficult to guard the Chamber, and, when the immense crowds of the morning came pouring along the quays, their task became hopeless. The barriers were stormed, and the lobbies of the House were occupied by the mob, among which were Arthur Ranc, the jail-companion of Clemenceau's father, and Georges Clemenceau himself, both wearing the képi of the National Guards. Clemenceau got inside without quite knowing

how, exchanged a few fisticuffs with a young usher (who later was especially courteous in handing to M. le Député Clemenceau his hat and stick), quarrelled violently with a number of députés who afterwards became the nucleus of his own party, and was in time to see the whole Chamber invaded by the people, howling for the proclamation of the Republic. The Comte de Palikao, still faithful to his Imperial master, had no chance whatever of making himself heard above the tumult. The moderate Thiers only managed to dominate those immediately around him. Gambetta alone was given a hearing.

Such was the violence of the mob that it was clear to Gambetta that satisfaction of its desires could alone prevent a revolution and civil war. Amid thunderous applause, he declared, in the form of a resolution, that the reign of the house of Napoleon over France was forever ended, and called upon the people to march on the Town Hall to restore the republican form of government. General Trochu and Gambetta, as heads of the provisional Government then established, appointed as President of the Municipal Council Etienne Arago, of whom Clemenceau had for long been a disciple. Arago entrusted to Charles Floquet and Clemenceau the task of dealing with the Senate, which seemed to be hankering for an opportunity of displaying its independence, and let it be understood that it would not follow the Lower House in its revolutionary rapidity. The Senate was to sit at ten o'clock that night, but by then Paris was so completely in the hands of the Republicans that when Floquet and Clemenceau summoned the military Gover-

nor of the Luxembourg to close the Senate, he did so without further ado. When Arago a few days later dismissed the Parisian mayors of the old régime, and put his Republican friends in their places, the last vestiges of the political machinery of the Empire in Paris had vanished. They would have been obliterated in any case, if only by the flood of proclamations poured upon the capital by the provisional Government and by the mayors of the Commune. At times their authors appeared to be more concerned with finding a correct historic precedent for events, and expressing it in appropriately extravagant language, than in defeating Germany.

Clemenceau, who had put up his doctor's plate in Montmartre, was appointed mayor of that storm area. Even though we know that with him words were always the symbols of facts and resolute intentions, his first proclamation as mayor smells of the burning of midnight patriotic oil: "Citizens," it ran, "must France destroy herself and disappear, or shall she reoccupy her old post in the vanguard of peoples? It is this question we are called upon to answer today. The enemy is at the city gates. The day is perhaps not distant when our breasts will be the last ramparts of the Fatherland. Each one of us knows his duty. We are children of the Revolution; let us seek inspiration in the example of our fathers in 1792, and like them, we shall conquer. Vive la France! Vive la République!"

A collection of the manifestoes of those days, kindly lent to the author by Mr. Rudyard Kipling, gives perhaps a better idea of the feverish activity displayed by Paris than can be obtained from any ponderous history.

Every one was bursting with the desire to do something, without quite knowing what, how, or where. M. Magnin, Minister of Agriculture, deluged the city with notifications addressed to "Messieurs les bouchers de Paris," by which he endeavoured, with as little result as did his successors in the Great War, to control the price of foodstuffs, and prevent profiteering. There was a painful lack of any central authority. Each Commune, each sector of a Commune, organised its own ambulance services. Scores of irregular corps were formed. An early proclamation appeals to the Nimrods of Paris to band themselves together, so that "while the regular fire of our brothers of the National Guard mows down our opponents, each shot from our carbines shall kill one of our enemies." They were to be called "Saint Hubert's Sharp-shooters," and their uniform was to be as plain as possible, "without glitter or luxury."

There were Legions of every imaginable description, each of them wearing some kind of simple uniform, and none of them knowing really what it was to do. The "Amazons of the Seine" must have been the most puzzled as to their duties. These two battalions of women were "to defend the ramparts, and to give to the fighting troops with whom they were acting all domestic and fraternal services compatible with military discipline." Their uniform was black, with coquettish touches supplied by an orange stripe down their trousers, and a képi edged with the same colour. M. Thobois, "Architect of the National Library," former member of a scientific mission to Phoenicia, had the honour of informing the public on a green poster that he had "discovered how to

guide himself through the air against the wind," and that, once 200,000 francs and the Place du Carrousel had been placed at his disposal, within a month, by his invention for aerial locomotion, France would be freed.

General Trochu, whose health did not allow him to take the field, had all his time filled up with trying to instil elementary ideas of discipline among the National Guard. He had his famous victory plan locked up in his lawyer's office, and it has never seen the light of day. All this heterogeneous mass of an army in the making remained chaotic until the end. Parisians were shot in nearly every district of the town by care-free National Guards appointed to defend them. Mobilisation and requisition orders were cheerfully ignored, and it is a moot point whether more harm was done by the lukewarm in national defence or by the ardent zeal of busybodies who were raising regiments of their own, and erecting barricades which did nought but hinder the defence of the city. There was no one man in the Provisional Government strong enough to ride the whirlwind. Respect for revolutionary tradition forbade that anything should be done without popular sanction, and the outbreak of electoromania did not improve matters. The Provisional Government, in preparation for a siege, submitted itself by referendum to the approval or disapproval of the people. All the officers of the National Guard had to be elected by their men; the mayors too had to go before their constituents.

Clemenceau obtained a triumphant majority in Montmartre, where his administration was distinguished by an alert desire to raise troops, open shooting-ranges, and

control the profiteer. He was particularly anxious to lighten the domestic suffering of his fellow-citizens, and threw himself heart and soul into the organisation of schools at which the children's attendance enabled the father to do his military duty, and the mother to get work. In this effort he was greatly helped by that strangely tender heroine of the barricades, Louise Michel, whose intimate friend he remained until her death. Les Montmartrois looked to this young, energetic man of thirty with complete confidence. He had shared their sufferings and their growing anger with the incapacity of General Trochu and the failure of the Provinces to fight through to the assistance of the Capital. The extent of the trust placed in him was shown by his election by very nearly one hundred thousand votes, as Deputy for Paris, to the National Assembly summoned at Bordeaux to decide whether to continue the struggle or to accept terms of peace.

The meetings were held in the great theatre of Bordeaux, and Paris for the first time realised how mistaken she had been in counting upon whole-hearted assistance from the Provinces in her desperate position. Over two-thirds of the members were composed of petty nobility, country squires, Orleanists, and even some Bonapartists, and the general tendency of the Assembly was distinctly in favour of a monarchy. It is perhaps but natural that all the conservative interests in the country should have seen in a monarchy the only protection for their interests against the extravagant republicanism displayed by Paris. So intense was the anti-republican feeling that the name of Garibaldi aroused a storm of protest, and

that when Victor Hugo rose to claim that the National Assembly should acknowledge its debt to a man who had fought for France, he was howled down. On 1st March the cession of Alsace and a large portion of Lorraine was passed by a big majority. Then followed the tragic declaration of the deputies of the ceded territories and their withdrawal, as Germans, from the Assembly which they had entered as Frenchmen. Clemenceau, and a few of his radical republican friends from Paris, voted against any cession of territory. Then, as in 1917, he was in favour of a fight to the finish. Victor Hugo was in tears, while Clemenceau, of sterner stuff, was speechless with grief and anger. The scene had a lasting effect upon his life, and a determination to right this wrong guided his policy until 28th June 1919, when he, the last surviving deputy of that Assembly at Bordeaux, presided over the ceremonial signature of the Treaty of Versailles which gave back the lost provinces to France, and removed the crape which for forty-eight years had hung on the Statue of Strasbourg in the Place de la Concorde.

VI. DEFEAT

Bordeaux and the provinces continued to discover a number of ways in which to show their deep-rooted suspicion of Paris. The capital, instead of finding itself (as it had some right to do) the spoilt child of the nation, was cold-shouldered in every way. Ill-feeling rose rapidly, and was only increased by the somewhat lugubrious triumphal march of the victorious Germans from Longchamps down the Champs Elysées. That mournful occasion passed off without any notable incident; but, once Germany's troops had departed, disappointment and anger with Bordeaux grew apace. The Conservative majority in the National Assembly, anxious to read a lesson to Parisian extremists, declared that in future Versailles should be the capital of France, and decided to continue its sittings in the palace of Louis XIV. It was clear that Thiers, who had become the head of authority, was anxious to keep the army in his hands, and at the same time to remain able to strike at once at any movement of revolt in Paris. It would be difficult to imagine anything less likely to bring about the submission of the deposed capital. Despite all the theatricality of her siege existence, the sufferings of her people had been greater than those of any other city, and

with justice they felt entitled to national recognition. Instead of that, Thiers went out of his way to trample upon Parisian political susceptibilities. General Vinoy, an old Imperial senator, whose feats of war in no way justified his selection, was appointed to the command of all the troops; General d'Aurelle de Paladines, another officer of the Empire, was given command of the National Guard; and a third, General Valentin, was made Prefect of Police. Freedom of the press was abolished, and, in breach of formal promises, Blanqui was tried and condemned to death. The vexatory measures of Bordeaux in the political field were doubled by equally tactless handling of economic questions, which brought the whole city face to face with ruin. The moratorium for commercial bills which had been in force since the beginning of the war, was abolished; and all bills for the first three months of the war were made payable with interest.

Within four days about 150,000 bills were refused; and some 45,000 tradespeople of every category were faced with bankruptcy. Rents also became immediately payable, with the result that 300,000 working men and small shopkeepers, who had spent the last farthing of their capital during the siege, were faced with disaster.

Clemenceau, warned of the ugly turn of events, hurried back to his Mairie at Montmartre. There it was that the situation was most threatening. The day the Germans had made their entry into Paris the Montmartrois and the National Guard had seized a number of guns which had been forgotten at Neuilly and the parc Monceau. With infinite labour these guns had been hauled to the

Place des Vosges in the heart of old revolutionary Paris, and right up to the top of the Butte de Montmartre. One reason given for the mob's action was that it wished to prevent this artillery from being handed over to the Germans. But the real cause was the fear, aroused by the proceedings of the National Assembly at Bordeaux, that an attempt would be made to restore the monarchy. Clemenceau, well aware of the disasters which were bound to follow an outbreak of civil war under the eyes of the German army of occupation, acted as intermediary between the National Guard and the Government, in the hope of finding some peaceful way out of the trouble.

On 6th March he was given a promise that nothing should be done without due warning being given to the National Guard; and he conveyed this promise, backed by his own, to the leaders of the popular party. The Government, in breach of this undertaking, occupied the Butte at dawn on 18th March, disarmed the sentries, and began to remove the artillery. Before they had had time to take away more than one or two of the guns, Montmartre was in an uproar. Men, women and children poured into the narrow streets, right up to the mitrailleuses, mingled with the troops, and cheered them. General Lecomte ordered his men to open fire upon them. They refused and joined the rioters, who then seized Lecomte. He was taken to the dance-hall of the Château-Rouge, which was soon surrounded by soldiers shouting for his death. He was removed to the rue des Rosiers, where he was joined by General Clément Thomas, an officer who had distinguished himself by

the vigour of his repression at the time of the fall of Louis-Philippe.

Clemenceau meanwhile had naturally become suspect to his own people. Had not the promise he had given, on the word of the Minister of the Interior, been broken? He was practically a prisoner in the Mairie, where he was trying to save the lives of two hundred officers and some police who had taken refuge there. When he heard of the capture of the two generals he started for the rue des Rosiers. Muskets were levelled at him; a roar of "Judas!" and "Traitor!" accompanied his attempts to come to the rescue of the generals; and when he got there he was too late—both had been put up against a wall and shot.

That day Thiers, following the plan he had recommended to Louis-Philippe, went to Versailles, leaving Paris in the hands of the insurgents. Arago's mayors were promptly removed. Clemenceau managed to get out of Paris to take his seat again in the Assembly at Versailles. Thiers refused to discuss all the well-intentioned proposals of conciliation which reached him from many quarters. He was determined to subdue Paris. Clemenceau and a few of his friends, who were also deputies, were howled at when they entered the Assembly at Versailles, and the house scarcely listened to his prophetic picture of the terrible struggle and disasters which would follow civil war. He thus defined his programme: "Recognition of the Republic; granting of the right to Paris to govern herself by a council freely elected and with full control over her police, finance, teaching and public welfare; complete freedom of conscience; and that

the protection of Paris be entrusted entirely to the National Guard, composed of all valid electors." To Clemenceau Thiers replied: "The municipal rights of Paris shall be those of other towns, as laid down in the law to be passed by the Assembly. Paris shall have ordinary common law; nothing more and nothing less. And," he added, threateningly, "the army will enter Paris!"

Having failed in his conciliatory efforts at Versailles, Clemenceau returned to Paris in the hope of preventing an open clash. It was mainly through his efforts that the municipal elections were held. These showed him how completely he had lost the confidence of the people; for at Montmartre he only obtained some seven hundred votes. He was also to discover, when he and some of his friends started off on a propaganda tour in the provinces, that he was equally suspect to the Versailles Government. Any attempt at conciliation between Paris and Versailles had been made a criminal act by Thiers' Government. Four of Clemenceau's companions were arrested. Clemenceau alone, although the police were hot upon his track, managed to speak at Orleans, Alençon, Nantes, and Bordeaux. He also had time to pay a brief visit to his family, and see his first-born child. When he finally reached Paris again on 21st May, after a long détour, he found the barriers closed, and was told that the Versailles troops had at last made an entrance into the capital. Knowing the dangers that he ran from both sides at such a moment he withdrew to La Vendée.

Clemenceau's own account of how he avoided being shot by the Commune or by the Government troops, both

of which would have cheerfully executed him, is contained in a letter dated from Féaule, 28th May 1871: "Dear Madam,—I don't want to leave you in any anxiety as to my fate. I have been at home with my family for the last two days. I left Paris for the Bordeaux Congress on 10th May as a delegate of the League of Republican Union for the Rights of Paris. You know that this Congress was not held, M. Thiers having deemed fit to thrust on one side the last olive-branch to which the country should have clung. I had to come back from Bordeaux to Paris. The railway-stations were full of police who were arresting everybody. Of the five delegates sent out by the League, four were arrested. I was the only one not under lock and key. I therefore had to take my precautions. I went straight to Strasbourg, thinking, with some reason, that I wouldn't be looked for on the Eastern railway; and I was indeed able to get as far as the Gates of Paris by taking this line. I could not get inside the town. Fighting had already begun, and the Prussians, in agreement with the Versaillais, were preventing egress and ingress from the City. All the avenues leading to the Gates were barricaded. Several times I got within shouting distance of the ramparts, but could get no further. The only thing I could do was to come back home, which I did without any delay. You can imagine my reception here! The newspapers tell us of ghastly events. I still hope that they are exaggerated. I am not without an apprehension as to what has happened to my Paris home, and to yours. . . ."

An illustration of what would have awaited him in Paris was provided by the misfortunes of a young

Brazilian who somewhat resembled Clemenceau. He was arrested and dragged off to the Pepinière barracks. The unhappy man protested in broken French, and asked to be brought before a judge. They gave him a colonel instead. This officer had been in Mexico, and had picked up a few words of Spanish. The Brazilian, not understanding him, did not reply. "You're a pretty scoundrel!" shouted the Colonel. "You a Brazilian and you don't speak Spanish! He's Clemenceau all right. Let him be shot!" The Colonel was unfortunately unaware that the Brazilians do not speak Spanish, but Portuguese. Happily the man's cousin, immediately the arrest was made, hurried off to fetch the Brazilian Consul, who arrived just in time to save his compatriot.

Clemenceau remained in La Vendée while the first fury of repression was exhausting itself. When he returned to Paris his old electors of Montmartre had had an opportunity of appreciating his attempted rôle as conciliator, and sent him to the Municipal Council.

VII. REPUBLICAN BIRTH-PANGS

The suspicion in which he was held, both by Versaillais and Parisian, in connection with the murders of General Lecomte and General Clément Thomas, kept Clemenceau in retirement in La Vendée. He had just been spared the lurid horrors of the last great conflagration of the Commune, when what was left of Paris by the pétroleuses was recaptured, quarter by quarter, street by street, barricade by barricade, from insurgents who knew that they had no mercy to expect from their conquerors. The utmost savagery was shown on both sides. "Order reigned" in the smoking ruins of the City. Any one unable to show pattes blanches (hands unstained by gunpowder) was shot forthwith. The courts-martial delivered 13,450 sentences, including nearly four thousand of death. Among those condemned were one hundred and fifty women, twenty of them to death, eight to penal servitude for life, including Louise Michel; and over sixty children, of less than sixteen years of age, were condemned to exile, terms of imprisonment, or sent to correctional houses. The precise figures as to the number of Parisians shot down by the Versaillais troops are not available. According to Camille Pelletan at least thirty thousand were killed, while according to the Government

Report the figure was no more than seventeen thousand. Most historians estimate that twenty-five thousand is about the right figure. Among the ruins which Clemenceau found on his return to Paris were the rue Royale, the Hôtel de Ville, the lovely Palace of the Legion of Honour, the Foreign Office, the Palais de Justice, the Ministry of Finance, the Tuileries, the Louvre Library, the Porte St. Martin, Royal and Lyric theatres, the Arsenal, the Prefecture. The rue St. Honoré, rue de Rivoli, and a number of railway stations were flame-scorched skeletons. In the Place Vendôme, the column lay in broken pieces on the ground.

Clemenceau, when he took his seat at the Luxembourg —the Hôtel de Ville still being uninhabitable—resumed his apprenticeship to national politics, begun in a small way as Mayor of Montmartre. Service as a Municipal Councillor has always been one of the recognised approaches to parliamentary life. While Gambetta was seeking in a large manner to strengthen the Republican party against the monarchist tendencies of the National Assembly, Clemenceau, on a smaller and more practical scale, was grappling with the problems surrounding the reconstruction of the capital. He was soon busy as a member of those Committees which have been throughout French parliamentary history the nursery ground of budding ministers. His preoccupations were of a varied nature, and dealt with military service, public worship, municipal statistics, archives, and undertaking. Such are the ingenious generalisations of the French political mind that there was hardly one of those matters which did not involve the defence of republican ideas. Through-

out his time at the Municipal Council, of which he became President at the age of thirty-four, he was tireless in seeking to alleviate the sufferings of the poor, whose lives he knew so well, and in extending the opportunities that wide and free education may afford. He spent his time at the Town Hall, in the rue des Vignes, where he had installed his family, and in Montmartre, where every Sunday his clinic was open for the discussion of physical, as well as political, ills. He saw the growing threat of monarchism against the Republic, and was preparing his candidature for Parliament.

His establishment was unlike a surgery, but the three rooms of which it consisted were besieged every Sunday morning at 8 o'clock by a solid crowd of electors who were ill, and electors who were seeking the support of the Municipal Councillor in order to obtain some favour from the administration. With all of them Clemenceau was bluntly jovial, and, for a man of his age, astonishingly paternal. Recalling those days, he says, "I had a dispensary at Montmartre. Don't let this high-sounding word give you any picture of a hospital organisation. A consulting-room and a waiting-room; that was all the rudimentary installation I could offer the public. I had some patients; I also had people asking for my favour or some public job. Sometimes these two characteristics were combined in one man. Occasionally there were some curious misunderstandings. One day a consumptive came in. Without closing the door of my waiting-room, I put him in the corner of my consulting-room, and told him rather abruptly to undress himself. While the wretched man was preparing to be sounded, another

patient came in, another consumptive. I put him in the other corner, and, more imperatively than before, said, 'Undress yourself.' A third visitor came in. He was a strong fellow, rosy-cheeked, without the slightest sign of illness. He had heard the order I had given to the two men who had preceded him. He saw his comrades undressing. Without hesitation he rapidly took off his shirt and waistcoat, let fall his trousers, and then placidly remarked to me, 'I would like a place in the Post Office, please!' The poor fellow thought that whatever any one might want of me, he had to ask for it in undress uniform."

Clemenceau's inaugural speech as President of the Municipal Council was a bold bid for the wider tribune of Parliament, and showed his readiness to join Gambetta and his parliamentary following in fighting for the institution of a recognised Republic. He declared that only by firm prudence could the Republic be strengthened. He was convinced that Paris (which was still being treated as a town apart) could peacefully obtain her full rights by a campaign for republicanism by speech and by pen, no less than by constitutional action. His policy was that of a son of the Revolution, but he considered that Revolution as having become an inherent part of constitutional order in France. The very next year he was sent by his municipal electors to the wider platform he sought for in Parliament.

A country such as England, with centuries of established government, naturally finds some difficulty in understanding the causes of the political confusion which prevailed in France after the disappearance of the Empire, and which have not yet entirely vanished. The

Great Revolution showed that in France no régime can really be considered safe. When all the changes in the system of government which have followed that Great Revolution are borne in mind, it is but natural that even today a more-or-less successful war, although it may have given a new lease of life to the Republic, cannot be thought to have made it immortal. When the circumstances which surrounded the birth of that Republic are remembered, it will be realised how justified were the republican fears for the stability of their institutions, and how easily, in the chaos of some such great scandal as those of Dreyfus and the Panama Canal, or in a skilfully engineered popularity, such as that of General Boulanger, the Republic might have been swept away.

Perhaps it was only the failure of the various claimants to the throne of France, and their supporters, to unite against the Republic, that the Republic became at all possible. There were three Richmonds in the field. The Legitimists put forward as Henry V, the Comte de Chambord, great-nephew of Louis XVI. The Orleanist flag was carried by the Comte de Paris, a grandson of Louis-Philippe; and the Bonapartists frankly strove to place Napoleon III upon the throne again. All three parties were a threat to the republicans, but there all unity stopped. When it came to deciding to whom the destinies of the country should be entrusted, wrangling and intrigue became the order of the day. How strongly anti-republican was the National Assembly was shown immediately after the conclusion of the war in 1871, when the Duc d'Aumale and the Prince de Joinville were returned to Parliament; the Duc d'Aumale and the

Duc de Nemours were given their former ranks in the army and navy, and the Duc de Chartres received a military commission. Before this could be possible, the laws banishing the Orleans family for ever from France had to be abrogated, which was done by a majority of no less than 345 votes.

The Comte de Chambord came to Paris in the same year to claim his throne and to fulminate against the Revolution. He even felt strong enough to declare that he would have nothing to do with any tri-colour flag. The white flag of monarchy for him. He had received it from the old King on his death-bed in exile; it had always been for him a souvenir of his distant country; it had floated over him in his cradle, and he wished that it should droop over his tomb. The Bonapartists too were busy preaching that the misfortunes of France were due, not to the Emperor, but to the republican Revolution which followed Sedan. With great ostentation they celebrated the anniversary of the birth and death of Napoleon I, and the birthday of the Empress Eugénie.

Gambetta was practically alone in fighting for the Republic. He stumped the country from end to end, earning the title of "commercial traveller for democracy." However much the Assembly might rage against Gambetta's prophecy that a new governing class was arising, with the principles of the Revolution as its guide, no less than fifty-eight bye-elections turned in favour of the Republic and showed the response of the country to his appeal. "Let us cultivate, with every possible precaution, the germ of the Republic. Let us tend this young sapling with care." That care was needed was shown by

a passage in the correspondence of the then British Ambassador in Paris, Lord Lyons, who, writing less than a year after the war, and discussing the efforts being made to form a monarchial constitution, says, "Many people expect to hear any morning of a coup by which Thiers and the Assembly will be deposed, and an appel au peuple made, to end in a restoration of the Empire." Thiers, a man whose talents were only exceeded by his own appreciation of them, while anti-republican, lacked the nerve necessary to take a decision in this matter of the new constitution. As Lord Newton said, "The French preferred to have at the head a man qui monte à cheval, rather than a man qui monte à la tribune."

They found the horseman in Marshal MacMahon. Thiers was driven from office by a combination of the Right, whose hopes in him had been disappointed, and of Republicans, who had a long account to settle with him, the heaviest items of which were represented by the repression of the Commune. MacMahon's appointment was in the nature of a compromise. For expediency's sake he was made, for a term of seven years, President of a Republic which at that time had no legal existence, and he was made President by the very men who hoped that, before many years were over, a Republic would have become an impossibility. Meanwhile, although the conservatives were still strong in the Assembly, their strength was being sapped by lost bye-elections, by Gambetta's whirlwind campaign, and by a growing knowledge among ordinary country-folk that a Republic did not of necessity mean bloodshed, flame and famine. When the first of those elections in the country went

towards the Left, Clemenceau, speaking to Arthur Ranc, exclaimed: "We are saved; the provinces have not taken fright!"

Nevertheless, when, in 1875, the Assembly, after weeks of lobbying and manoeuvring, was finally faced with the necessity of deciding for or against the Republic, the motion declaring it was only carried by 353 votes to 352. Two men are credited with having founded the Republic with this one single vote. There was a Parisian lawyer, M. Senart, who, as a conservative and a notary, always attended the Assembly dressed in black and wearing a white tie. One day the Duc de Broglie, who was then Prime Minister, arrived at the House in a downpour. He saw a very reverend-looking individual standing in the hall, and, taking him for an usher, told him to carry his umbrella to the cloak-room and to see that it didn't drip on the floor. Senart, furious at having been taken for a lackey by the leader of his own party, made a vow that in future he would vote with the Left, and, according to this story, it was he who made the French Republic.

Another and much more likely explanation is that General de Chabron, who was among the waverers, had decided to abstain, but at the last moment, while the count was already in progress, slipped into the urn a white bulletin in favour of the Republic.

VIII. DEPUTY

The Constitution, as finally adopted, left the way wide open to dynastic ambitions. Formless and contradictory, it was clear on one thing at least—that it was voted by many who saw in it nothing but a short Republican interlude, and in President MacMahon a mere stop-gap. The Marshal was a firm figure of a soldier. Brave, and reasonably successful as a man of war, he was obstinate, and practised a form of jovial stupidity which made him many friends, without, however, winning him any admirers. Buttressed by dynastic interests, fortified by a long tradition of political prudence, he would have made a worthy and somewhat dull constitutional monarch. Indeed, his actions as President were in many ways those of a constitutional monarch, but, unluckily for him, there were too many Pretenders to his throne, and the dread menace of Republicanism was spreading everywhere. Its hold upon the country was shown by the election returns of 1876, when no less than 356 Republicans of all shades were sent to the Lower House, the Senate remaining Conservative.

Fortunately for MacMahon, Republican unity was a thing of the past. It seemed as though even stalwarts such as Jules Simon, Jules Ferry and Gambetta became

frightened of their responsibilities as they drew near the seats of the mighty. Gambetta in particular became an apostle of opportunism, quiet, and order. Clemenceau and his radical friends refused to put any water in their wine. In his electoral campaign he stuck firmly to the colours of the Revolution. "The Conservative Republicans," he said, "ask the minimum from the Republic; we its maximum. We Radical Republicans," he declared, "we want a Republic for its results; the great and fruitful social reforms which it will bring us. We will not worry as to whether we must quicken or slacken our march towards achieving the democratic and social reorganisation of our country."

In accepting an invitation to stand for the Clignancourt division of Montmartre, he harked back to the great upheaval of the eighteenth century: "Our aim," he wrote, "is to carry through the great work of renewal begun by the French bourgeoisie in 1789, and left unfinished. That task is the restoration of social peace, which has been so gravely endangered, through measures of reaction and fear, by Governments which, being enlightened, are all the more guilty—the peace of the Republic, the peace of justice and of freedom. What better guarantee of order can there be than the practice of essential liberties? How can this be questioned when we see that eighty years of systematic compression of French thought have resulted in periodical outbursts in which we have supped the horrible dregs of civil warfare?"

This today, with Labour, Socialism, and Communism, all serving their probationary period as governing sys-

tems, may sound very mild to be termed Revolutionary. But Clemenceau meant every word of it, and was prepared to follow each word to its logical conclusion. Contrast between this programme and that of the new Government, necessitated by Republican success at the polls, will show how deep was the gulf separating the Radical Republicans from the country gentlemen. Counting upon Republican discords, M. Dufaure, the new Prime Minister, went before a House in which there was a majority essentially hostile to him, and, giving an anti-Republican twist to the Constitution, declared that, "Chosen by the President of the Republic to use 'in his name' the powers conferred upon him by the Constitution, the Government would practise a policy of social conservation based on the sacred laws of religion, morality, and the family."

The Republican victory remained sterile for long. Reactionaries remained in control of most of the key positions of the administration. MacMahon was determined to fight to the last Parliamentary ditch against the swelling Republican armies. Clemenceau, as Municipal Councillor, had been preparing for this fight. He had by wise administration acquired a great reputation among Parisians, who, moreover, were not forgetful of his defence of Paris as the capital of France in the days of Thiers.

When he first entered the Chamber of Deputies he at once showed that he was a force to be reckoned with; not only on account of his mordant irony, but by his introduction of a style of Parliamentary speaking until then unknown in France, but already thoroughly estab-

lished at Westminster: that of debate, rather than of rhetoric. Clemenceau was ever a friend of the underdog, and his first speech at the tribune was a demand for the granting of a complete and immediate amnesty for all those condemned in the repression which followed the recapture of Paris by Thiers. The reporter of the bill, a Conservative, had failed to establish a link between his arguments and his conclusions. All the former were in favour of Clemenceau's proposal, and yet he summed up against it. Clemenceau, with the light rapier of debate, pinked his man time after time. "He approves," he said, "of forgetting and forgiving, but proposes to do neither. He admits that proper weight has to be given to the terror and misery of the men who made the Commune, to the fact that they were swept off their feet, and yet these circumstances are not considered. He discusses an amnesty bill, which he declares to be irreproachable and without danger, and rejects it. The whole of his report shows that something can be done, and he concludes by proposing to do nothing. Was Paris," he asked of the Government, "the prey of bandits who threw themselves upon the City to destroy, pillage, and burn? Was not the republican population the victim of circumstances for which it was in no way responsible, and which led from the Empire to invasion, defeat and disorganisation; to the most appalling convulsions of civil war?" Having shown that Paris was responsible neither for the Empire nor for the war, he proceeded to argue that all the misunderstandings between Paris and the Government of National Defence arose from the fact that the capital enthusiastically

believed in the possibility of victory, and that this view was not shared by the Government. The insurrections of the siege were to his mind, and in this he was supported by General Trochu, due to the feeling of the City that all was not done that should have been done to obtain victory. These misunderstandings were increased by the discontent of the National Guard of 250,000 men, who only wanted to fight, and were given practically no chance to do so. He concluded the first portion of his plea by declaring that history would show that the people of Paris had been the victims, not the authors, of civil disturbances.

Turning to a rapid examination of the reprisals against Paris, he asked whether it was not time to put an end to them. Did not people feel that Paris had been sufficiently chastised? The summary courts, which, according to the Government itself, had executed seventeen thousand people, had no time whatever to distinguish between ordinary common law and political offences. Defining political crimes theoretically, he argued that they were crimes committed in what their authors, rightly or wrongly, believed to be the general interests of the community. He summed up the results of that repression: in addition to seventeen thousand summary executions, fourteen thousand people were condemned to varying terms of imprisonment, and about one hundred thousand Parisians wandered abroad to Belgium, and in particular to England, a loss to France only comparable with the mass emigration of the Huguenots.

When Clemenceau made his speech, the embers of this terror were still warm. Men were still being arrested for

their share in the Commune, five years before. Three thousand six hundred prisoners were still in the convict islands; two hundred and forty were still serving terms of penal servitude, and sixteen hundred other victims of the Commune were still serving minor sentences of imprisonment. Meeting frankly the argument that the Communists had not respected the great laws of humanity, he pointed out that humanity never had been respected, either by Governments, who, thanks to their power, were in no need of amnesty, nor by Revolutionaries, who were always in need of it, and had always obtained it. Historically, he pointed out, amnesty had never meant rehabilitation, but appeasement and pacification.

This speech of his was the beginning of seventeen years of formidable Parliamentary activity as the faithful watch-dog of a very unstable Republic against the plots, enterprises, and intrigues of reactionary conservatism.

Jules Simon was called to office by the Marshal as being the least offensive Republican, and the one most likely to become a docile instrument while the return of the Empire was being prepared. But even a time-server such as Jules Simon could not long withstand the day-by-day pressure exerted by the Republicans. Finally, on the 16th May, a decisive stage of the battle was entered upon when the President, calling Jules Simon to account for further concessions to the Left, gave him no alternative but to resign.

MacMahon immediately formed, under the Duc de Broglie, a Cabinet of fighting reactionaries, and prorogued the Chamber for a month, during which time both sides prepared for the struggle. When the House

met again it was evident that, under the common peril of an Imperialist restoration, the various tendencies of republicanism had been welded into a solid block, of which Gambetta was the eloquent and vigorous animator. The first act of the reassembled Chamber was to overturn the Government. MacMahon and his entourage were furious, and, pushed by his interested counsellors, the President took the hazardous step of dissolving Parliament. The electoral campaign which followed has remained famous. Fighting, Gambetta lost the chilling moderation of his opportunism. He seemed to be speaking everywhere at once, and wherever he spoke he left behind him some such slogan as "Le cléricalisme, voilà l'ennemi," or his summing up of the alternatives before MacMahon as "Se soumettre ou se démettre."

Gambetta had the support of a committee of eighteen resolute men, who were ready to carry on the fight with whatever weapons might prove to be necessary, and on whatever battleground. Clemenceau was by no means the least experienced in conspiratorial work, nor by any means the least active. His apprenticeship to Blanqui in his early days in the Latin Quarter stood him in good stead. He helped in the committee's work of purchasing arms and of secreting them at convenient spots throughout Paris. Although all hoped that the fight would be kept within political limits, and confined to the polling booths, the Republicans were justified in seeing in an order of the day to the Army an unmistakable hint of an armed coup d'état.

The Government went to unheard-of lengths in the

way of intimidation in order to defeat the Republicans. Having issued this order of the day, the President started for the provinces to act personally as the chief Conservative speaker. "The struggle is between order and disorder," he said. "You will vote for the candidate I recommend to your free suffrage." How freely these votes could be cast may be judged from the fact that the Conservative list, printed on special white paper, recommended the candidates as being those of the Government and of Marshal MacMahon. A clean sweep was made of all officials in any way suspect of Republican leanings. Sixty-two prefects were removed; 613 Municipal Councils and 244 Associations were dissolved. Over 2000 cafés and estaminets, which played the part now filled by the working men's clubs, were closed; 1385 officials were dismissed. Over 1000 newspaper hawkers were prosecuted for selling Republican newspapers. The publisher of a cartoon depicting MacMahon on horseback, with the caption "I must say the horse looks intelligent!" suffered all the rigours of the law.

Ministers were at least frank in their methods of ensuring a Republican defeat. The Minister of the Interior told his officials throughout the country that any one of them using the prestige he enjoyed as an agent of Government against the interest of that Government could count upon no weakness or tolerance being shown. The Minister of Finance, Eugène Caillaux, whose son Joseph was later to play a tragic part as leader of the Socialist-Radicals, did the same, and reminded the prefects that they had the right to suppress, for "political offences," the tobacco shops, which form another kind of poor man's

club. Railway servants and school-teachers, in fact, all over whom Government had a shred of authority, were to be made to toe the line. In a country with a bureaucracy as bloated as that of France, this tremendous pressure should have been sufficient to ensure Conservative victory. The result was a tribute to the independence of the voters, and well justified the fiery optimism with which Gambetta inspired his troops. Despite the whole weight of Church and State the French voted sturdily for the Republic. The 363 Republicans who had taken up MacMahon's challenge were returned, to the number of 327. The first, the most important, phase of the Republican battle was won, and apart from the serio-comic affaire Boulanger no serious threat was made of a return to a more personal form of government.

The Marshal tried for a time to deny the evidence of his senses. There was much talk of a coup d'état, of government by decree, and other violent measures. The situation abroad, whence Germany had watched with a jaundiced eye the recovery of France from the blows of 1870, was extremely delicate. Lord Derby dreaded the prospect of France again going back to the Empire; to a "government of adventurers, adventuresses, and priests." Germany wanted the uncertainty of the MacMahon system to be maintained, and, according to Lord Lyons, reporting inside gossip to London, the German Emperor himself took steps to inform MacMahon that, although he personally was anxious for peace, he would be unable to restrain Prince Bismarck from forcing on a war if a Clerical or a Radical Government were established in France. However this may be, the Duc de Broglie, who

had no doubt as to the fate attending him, went before the Chamber of Deputies and engaged in a moving oratorical fight for monarchy with the new governing factor of Republicanism, in the person of Gambetta. A Republican Committee, among whom was Clemenceau, asked for an inquiry into the acts of the Ministry. The Duc de Broglie roundly declared that there could be no compromise with "the radicalism and social upheaval of the Republic."

Gambetta, in replying, broadly outlined the programme which Clemenceau was to follow throughout his life: "You have said that the differences between us are caused by our widely opposed views of French life. That is indeed the truth. In spite of the changes that have gone on around you, in spite of the rising tide of democracy which it is your duty to regulate, enlighten, and direct, in spite of the progress made in our public customs, in spite of national interest and the sorry internal state to which French affairs have been brought since her disasters, the cleavage between us, in spite of all that, is due to the fact that you have remained an enemy of democracy—an aristocrat."

The defeated Government resigned a week afterwards. Clemenceau as Tiger had tasted his first blood. After a period of tremendous agitation at the Elysée, MacMahon produced a Ministry of the Unknown, most of whom were officials and reactionaries. The affronted Chamber refused to enter into contact with this collection of nonentities. But still the Marshal would neither "resign nor submit." More of a soldier than a politician, he sought for any means of fighting a rearguard action.

The advice of moderate men to form a Cabinet leaning towards Republicanism was rejected by his intimate advisers, some of whom urged him to summon the Chamber to vote the budget, and, in the event of a refusal, to raise taxation by decree, proclaim a state of siege, and arrest Gambetta, Clemenceau, and others of the Parliamentary majority. The country was warned of what was contemplated by the refusal of an officer to obey his Colonel's orders, which left no room for doubt that a coup d'état was planned. He informed his Colonel that, as an honest man, he could not play the part allotted to him in the crime of a coup d'état.

Unable to count upon the army, MacMahon had to submit, and called upon Dufaure to form a Ministry, mainly composed of the most moderate elements among the Republicans. Despite the very milk-and-water character of the combination, its creation on December 13, 1877, marked the acceptance of the Republic and the end of a seven years' fight against the idea of personal and dynastic rule. In this long fight for the Republic, Clemenceau, then only thirty-six years of age, although overshadowed by the great figure of Gambetta, had made his mark as a Radical leader. For the next fifteen years he sought to create in the Chamber a political power capable of putting his ideas into practice.

Clemenceau started his thirty-three years of Parliamentary life with the makings of a leader. His part in overturning the Empire, his rôle as Mayor of Montmartre and as Deputy to the National Assembly of Bordeaux in 1871, and, above all, his successful handling of reconstruction problems as member, and eventually as

President, of the Municipal Council, had already given him a reputation. Seldom has there been a politician so full of bonté for the people in its ignorance and its distress. Seldom has there been a man better placed than he to know the real Paris which lives perpetually on the knife-edge of despair. Already as a student he spent much of his time among the revolutionary-minded denizens of the populous Faubourg St. Antoine. As Mayor, and, above all, as Doctor of the ravaged slum of Montmartre, he used to the utmost his unrivalled opportunities of seeing how the under-world lived. His writings testify how well he understood their sufferings. Yet there lay a gulf between them, and, although by his war-leading he aroused the temporary gratitude of all classes, he was never accepted as anything but a tyrant by labour. Men who wanted to believe in him, who were content to wring from his Republic nothing more splendid than material benefits, could not be brought to see that revolution or class warfare was bound to result from any attempt to seize such profits. Having made up his mind that the Republic had, in 1875, become part of the Constitution of France, he set his face against any attempt to forestall its practical realisation by premature violence. To his mind, the practical victory could only be fully won by the constitutional method of tireless propaganda of Republican principles; by preparing the political world for new ideas, to be carried into effect by a social class new among the ruling elements of the political world.

It was perhaps more for these reasons than for his innate contempt for office as such that he adopted the

rôle of critic. All Clemenceau's political ideas were ruled by two passions: to engrave the words Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité, not merely upon public buildings, but in the laws of his country and in the hearts of his countrymen; and to see to it that neither by a spirit of mere revenge nor of ambitious adventure France should be placed in a position in which she could not at least defend herself.

In a speech at Marseilles, justly memorable for the broad sweep of his vision and the loftiness of his aims, he outlined the work which lay ahead of the Republic. "Who are we?" he asked. "Just men who claim as theirs the greatest and most generous ideas that have as yet made their appearance in the world. To deliver men from the chains of their ignorance, to free them from religious, economic, and political despotism; and, having freed them, to regulate by justice alone the freedom of their initiative; to aid by every means the soaring of man's faculties; in a word, to make man greater by placing him ever higher: such is our aim. Nothing great has been done in the world without the republican spirit. All masters of human thought link with us somewhere. They are valued and honoured by service given to our cause, which is that of humanity. That is why each one of us, however humble, has at times his share of the nobility and grandeur of the common cause, constantly moving to a higher plane by constantly striving for justice. But if we boast of having the highest conception of mankind, of respecting right, of being the most liberal of men, our responsibility must grow with our claims. The nobler the cause, the heavier the duty; therefore we

Durand Ruel

CLEMENCEAU, 1879
From a portrait by Manet

must all constantly examine ourselves. Besides freedom we want justice, a better distribution of social justice. Political emancipation of the citizen would be but a decoy without social emancipation of the man. As the Republic becomes established and strengthened, questions of social reformation must take precedence of political questions. We all understand that, as Chateaubriand says, 'A society where people have an income of two millions, while others are dying of hunger, cannot remain stable upon such foundations.' We must tend more and more towards a social system which shall give to every human activity the maximum of its normal development, and allow each one of us to reap the full value of the product of his activity. This is the essential republican problem, since the Republic aims at settling human relationships by freedom and by justice. Can one, for instance, differ upon the need of intellectual emancipation by thorough education?"

Clemenceau admitted that the faulty educational equipment of the country made it rather difficult to carry out all his programme at once. There should be established a methodical plan of national and complete education, with a curriculum designed to produce, not industrial machines, but men. After reviewing all the plans for enabling working men to share in the profits of their labour, the reduction of working hours, nationalisation of railways, canals, and mines, he warned his audience that all such reforms, and many others of the same sort, would not solve the social problem, for there was no formula which enabled a social state to be changed overnight, and because human progress ever lagged behind

absolute justice. "French democracy," he exclaimed, "wants freedom, complete freedom, in order to become an instrument of equality, and will no longer be denied. It only asks for what is possible. It is wearied of seeing so many speeches ending in so many delays, so many struggles and efforts, and the flowing of so much blood, for such meagre results."

This last passage is typical of Clemenceau's criticism. It was another warning to Jules Ferry and Gambetta that Republicans, and particularly Radical Republicans, were tired of their shilly-shallying, and of their timid opportunism in compromising with conservative elements. Clemenceau's relations with Gambetta had undergone a distinct change immediately after the arrival of the Republicans in power. Then, in spite of all his arguments that Gambetta, as leader of his triumphant party, should be prepared to assume direct responsibility in the shape of office, Gambetta prepared to exercise his influence as President of the Chamber of Deputies. Clemenceau found it illogical and undemocratic to exert in secret powers which had been openly conferred. There is a touch of cynical humour in this attitude of the man whose power in Parliament was immense, but who, with the exception of two periods of office, almost exclusively used his strength in preparing behind the scenes, in lobbies, plots and counterplots, his many deadly appearances at the tribune, or in so manoeuvring among the parties as to ensure the acceptance of his nominee, either for the premiership or for the Presidency of the Republic.

Although Clemenceau never missed an opportunity of

lauding the man who was his first political leader, towards the end his political antagonism towards Gambetta became more and more marked, and impatience with the dilatory opportunism of his policy frequently led to open hostility. Indeed, he played no small part in bringing about the defeat of Gambetta's Government in 1882, which lasted for less than three months, and which, by reason of the nonentities composing it, was derisively called "the Great Ministry."

The Tiger had made his first kill in 1879, when he brought about the resignation of a Minister of the Interior. Even his lust for Ministerial blood was amply satisfied in the period following upon Gambetta's disappearance, the period during which was founded the vast Colonial Empire of France. Then it was that he first was called the Tiger. Regardless of friendship, political camaraderie, and the persuasive hopes of office, he time after time sprang upon his own leaders from the concealment of the jungle of lobbies; he killed in the clearing of the Parliamentary tribune.

IX. GROWING PAINS

Diplomacy is rather like a delayed fuse bomb; the time of its explosion cannot be foretold with complete accuracy, and its results are frequently surprising. Rapid though had been the recovery of France since the war, after ten years of peace she still had to walk about the world like Agag, and could undertake nothing of importance without first ascertaining that the proposed action would not antagonise those forces in Germany which had observed with alarm that she was slowly making her way back into the world-ring, and was seeking for an opportunity of proving that abroad she was not entirely dependent upon German approval or acquiescence.

Gambetta placed the Tunis expedition in this light before his public, without, nevertheless, letting it know that Bismarck had been consulted upon every move. The ignominious spectacle of a great Power bullying a harmless and defenceless old Bey into accepting a Protectorate he did not want aroused the rapturous enthusiasm of unthinking Frenchmen.

Bismarck naturally encouraged France in her policy of Colonial expansion. Its cost in human life and treasure must be great. It must weaken the available military forces of France in Europe. Any of the almost certain

"'orrible disasters" with which Great Britain became painfully familiar in the course of her colonial policy would lead to discontent and political unrest in France, if not to revolution. Above all, since there was no quarter of the globe where French colonial ambitions would not clash with British interests, Bismarck saw in a French forward policy the best means of weakening the influence of both countries.

Years afterwards, in the Russo-Japanese war, Germany encouraged Russia to expand towards destruction in the Far East. She hoped to repeat the formula she had followed with France.

Lord Lyons wrote to the Foreign Office in 1881: "A little while ago dread of Germany made them [the French] unwilling to send a regiment or a ship to a distance from France, but since the Tunis affair they have gone into the trap he [Bismarck] has set for them with their eyes open. They feel sure of his support and encouragement in any distant enterprises, and the surer of it in proportion to the hostility which such enterprises may provoke in England and Italy. They thus find a cheap way of gratifying their vanity and of advancing some of their apparent interests."

Clemenceau saw these rocks ahead, but could not foretell that out of the constant Anglo-French friction which Bismarck had encouraged was to come an all-round settlement of Anglo-French differences, an alliance against Germany in the field, and an increase in French bayonet strength in 1914, drawn from the very colonies France had been urged by Bismarck to seize.

By this time Clemenceau was the undisputed leader of

the Radicals. He had for long enjoyed the double-edged flattery of the caricaturist. His appearance at the tribune made any Government quail. He was the Tiger in the full power of his killing. His first intervention, when Parliament reassembled in 1881, concerned Tunis. There the military parade had led to revolt and serious fighting.

During the recess large numbers of troops had been sent to Africa, and in a speech of great vigour Clemenceau accused Jules Ferry of having taken advantage of the absence of Parliament to set on foot a "holiday expedition" which had become a war, neither voted nor approved by the country's representatives. The next day the defeated Jules Ferry resigned and was added to the growing list of the Tiger's kills. Gambetta, his successor, fell on questions of constitutional revision; de Freycinet followed him six months later, also a victim of Clemenceau's objection to France's assuming so soon the airs of a strong world-power and its responsibilities abroad. She was still deeply involved in her Tunisian troubles when the control of Egypt pressed for immediate settlement. After months of negotiations, Britain asked France to join her in restoring order there, and in safeguarding the interests of Egyptian bond-holders.

Again Clemenceau was opposed to France's adding anything to her commitments. "Intervention," he said, "would be an imprudence. Europe is not yet disposed to let us do as we like. Our forces are already scattered in Tunis. Don't let us pull the chestnuts out of the fire for England."

De Freycinet, terrified by the prospect of falling into

the Tiger's clutches, could not make up his mind. Finally he decided to take a middle course, and to ask the House for credits for a military occupation of the Suez Canal; and again the Tiger licked his chops. When Jules Ferry returned to office in 1883, Tunis and Egypt were no longer burning questions. Ferry, by the firmness of his administration, braved Radical displeasure in his domestic legislation, Clemenceau being again and again in a minority; but after two years of power the waiting Tiger finally got him, and again on Colonial policy.

Tunis had put an end to Jules Ferry's first ministry. Tonkin was the grave of his second. In the debates upon the matter, the advocates and opponents of adventures abroad came really to grips. Those were the great days of colonial expansion when it was a wise and meritorious act to sell such varied merchandise as calico, Bibles, and Hamburg gin, to natives who had other fetishes. The Tonkin operation was carried out upon lines familiar to every nation seeking to carve a colonial empire out of other people's country. Tim Healy described them with much humour and some accuracy at the time when Britain was "on the road to Mandalay." The report that King Theebaw was drinking aroused the concern of H. M. Government. Later, the announcement that the King was still drinking interested public opinion. Thus, when later still it was reported that King Theebaw had started beating his wives, the British citizen was prepared for an expedition. The avowed object of the Tonkin expedition was to consolidate France's position in Annam by occupying the delta of the Red River. It ended in war with China, the expenditure of over

300,000,000 francs, and heavy losses. But it gained for France Annam and Indo-China.

The rival contentions of Jules Ferry and of Clemenceau led to constant and violent clashes between opportunist and radical Republicans. Jules Ferry argued that, since France was the second greatest maritime power in the world, it was her duty to keep intact every element of her colonial power, and to open up new fields for the development of future generations. To this Clemenceau first replied with an objection in principle, which is still officially part of the properties of French radicalism and socialism. All wars of annexation or conquest had been condemned by the Revolution. The Declaration of the Rights of Man refused to recognise that there were any distinctions to be made between civilised or uncivilised peoples, that any country was justified, in the alleged interest of civilisation, in attacking the universal rights of peoples. A colonial policy benefited financial oligarchies by diverting people's thoughts from domestic needs of social reform to far-distant horizons. A colonial policy dispersed afar the financial and military strength of the country, which might well be needed at home. "We are not," exclaimed Clemenceau, "an island like England. We cannot launch ourselves across the seas, certain of our defence whatever happens, thanks to our 'silver girdle,' as they say in England. We are in the midst of civilised Europe. We shall only be strong if we keep under our hand everything we have." He reminded the House that at the time of Sadowa the French army was in Mexico.

The long fight came to an end in March 1885, when

the public had become thoroughly alarmed by rising casualty lists, by swelling expenditure. When the news of General Négrier's defeat at Lang-Son reached Paris, with its revelations of incompetence and stupidity, Ferry had to ask the Chamber for another Tonkin credit of 200,000,000 francs. He left the tribune in a House grown significantly silent, without applause even from the shrunken ranks of his supporters. The murmuring crowd outside alone made itself heard.

The coup-de-grâce was again given by Clemenceau. "I shall not," he said, "reply to the Prime Minister. There can now be no discussion between his Ministry and any Republican in this Chamber. All debate between us is ended. We cannot listen to you, we cannot discuss the great interests of our country with you any longer. We neither wish to, nor do we, know you. I am willing, while I speak today, to let the veil of forgetfulness cover you. I have before me neither a Government nor Ministers, but men accused of high treason, upon whom, should there remain any sense of responsibility and justice in France, the hand of the law will fall without delay." Jules Ferry had literally to smuggle himself out of the Palais Bourbon. Such was the reward given by Clemenceau, himself to be the victim of even greater ingratitude, to a man who found Colonial France with an area of 1,122,000 square kilometres and a population of 5,000,000, which today, thanks largely to his forward policy, covers ten times that area with a population of over 50,000,000.

X. BOULANGER

Clemenceau's reputation, up to the Great War, was based almost entirely upon his tigerish habit of pulling down Ministers. His destructive rôle is all the better known as it was usually, at any rate as regards its last act, openly performed at the tribune of the Chamber of Deputies. He did not destroy, however, without the intention of rebuilding, and his constructive work has earned him the title of the French Warwick.

By 1886 France seemed to have a clear road before her. The early days of fear and struggle were over. The deaths of the Comte de Chambord and of the Prince Imperial had removed two of the chief enemies of the Republic, and she now seemed to have achieved stability. The growing pains which accompany all colonial expansion no longer irked her, and France was steadily freeing herself from the shackles of Bismarckian influence and regaining her place in world affairs. The moment appeared favourable for the practical realisation of domestic and social reform, which was rendered all the more urgent by the uprising of a Socialist party eager for results.

Before progress in this direction could be effected, first the Wilson scandals, and then the Boulanger, Panama,

and Dreyfus affairs, plunged the country into paralysing chaos.

Wilson was the son-in-law of Grévy, President of the French Republic, and investigation showed that, using his position at the Elysée to further his own ends, he had become involved in a scandalous traffic in the Legion of Honour and other republican decorations. Clemenceau had many outstanding scores to settle with Grévy; moreover, the scandal threw discredit upon the whole Republican régime; and Clemenceau flung himself into the battle, demanding with increasing vehemence the trial of Wilson, and bringing about the fall of the Rouvier Ministry, and later on the removal of Grévy from the Presidency of the Republic.

The Wilson scandal, although of great importance, was but an incident in the wider and more dangerous adventure of Boulangism, which plunged France back again into ministerial instability and rendered her impotent to carry out any comprehensive programme of social change.

Even the history of France has but few scandals faintly comparable with the story of this man without character or principles. Each party in turn, and some of them simultaneously, thought to benefit from him, and each in turn he betrayed by his lack of decision and courage. He succeeded in persuading even himself that he was l'homme qui monte à cheval. After he had led a whole country by the nose; aroused the alarm of every European power; been acclaimed by millions as the future saviour of France, first as the guardian of the Republic, then as the stalking-horse of Bonapartist and

Royalist ambitions; he completely collapsed in the crucial test. His adventure merely showed how unsatisfactory was the impersonal republican ideal to a people still hungering for a personal idol.

Boulanger, apart from his martial appearance, his black charger, and an unrivalled sense of publicity, had nothing in particular to recommend him. As a fighting soldier his career had not been dazzling, but while director of infantry in the War Office his military reforms, and especially the measures he had taken to make the ordinary soldier's life bearable, had earned him the reputation of being a sincerely Republican General.

The first political sponsor of the man who was to become ace of trumps in the Monarchist hand was no other than Georges Clemenceau, leader of the Radical party. It was thanks to his insistence that Boulanger was first named Minister of War in the de Freycinet Ministry of January 1886. He at once set to work to justify his Radical patron's support by removing from the capital a number of cavalry regiments whose officers were ostentatiously Monarchist, and by sternly forbidding politics in the army. His use of troops, or rather his failure to use troops, in labour disorders, was another token of his gratitude to the Radicals who had forced the door of office for him. On every occasion he went out of his way to court the popularity of the crowd.

Boulanger's immense influence with the mob soon became a matter of grave concern. His jingo attitude over the Schnaebele incident on the Franco-German frontier aroused the spectre of war, but increased his hold on the public mind as being the soldier who would avenge France.

Tall, blond-bearded, blue-eyed, with the svelte carriage of a young cavalry officer, he was adored by every concierge and housemaid in Paris. In his much bestarred uniform, with his feathered hat, he rode about Paris on his charger seeking the plaudits of a city which has always been almost as fond of its circuses, especially when military, as it is of its bread.

Nothing could apparently break the fascination exerted by the General. The splendours of a reception given by the Comte de Paris in his house in the rue de Varenne, on the occasion of his daughter's marriage, had alarmed the Government, which saw in the soirée an indication of Orleanist designs against the Republic. A bill was rapidly passed forbidding the presence on French territory of the heads and heirs of families having reigned in France, and authorising the Government to expel by decree any member of these families, all of whom were formally excluded from public service. It fell to the lot of General Boulanger, as Minister of War, to remove from their posts in the army the Duc d'Aumale and many other princely personages. Interpellated in the Chamber, General Boulanger replied by pointing out that no one could legally become an officer without passing through a military school, and that the Duke had been made a lieutenant at the age of fifteen, colonel when he was nineteen, and divisional-general at the age of twenty-one.

The next day the whole of Paris turned out to see its brav' Général at the 14th of July review, and the fine figure he cut lost nothing in its appeal to the crowd, even when the Duc d'Aumale published three letters written

to him only seven years before, in which Boulanger said: "It is to you I owe my promotion to be a general. I shall always be proud to have served under a chief such as you, and blessed be the day which will again place me under your orders."

Boulanger first of all denied the authenticity of these documents, but finally had to bow to the evidence. This proof of gross ingratitude, and the revelation of the General's more than opportunist character, astonishing though it may appear, in no way diminished the hero in the eyes of the mob. A few Radicals became alarmed as to the kind of man they were backing, but the General, who was left out of the Rouvier Ministry, continued to enjoy the incense of "his good City of Paris."

Suddenly the Government took a vigorous decision and appointed him to command an Army Corps far from the capital, at Clermont-Ferrand. The Parisians made up their mind that their idol should remain enshrined in their midst. The General was to leave the Gare de Lyon at 8 p.m. He drove to the station with a running escort of thousands around him, to find more thousands awaiting him there. The neighbouring roofs were black with people all shouting: Vive Boulanger! A mort Grévy! or howling aloud the refrain of a song which all Paris was soon singing: C'est Boulanger lange, lange; c'est Boulanger qu'il nous faut. He was followed into the station by a mob which, determined not to let him leave, stormed his train, while hundreds of enthusiasts took up a strategic position on the railway line in front of the locomotive, shouting "Partira pas." The General's aide-de-camp tried to save him from his friends by

smuggling him from one train into another. Finally he was hoisted on to an engine, which steamed out of the station shedding his admirers as it gathered speed.

Six days later, at the Longchamps review, President Grévy was hooted, and the name of Boulanger cheered again and again by a delirious crowd. During the Parliamentary recess the Wilson scandal burst, and Clemenceau snapped up the Rouvier Ministry in his stride, while stalking the bigger prey he was after at the Presidency of the Republic. Poor Grévy struggled hard against his doom, which formed the topic of every cabaret song, while the President was still searching despairingly for some one, of whatever party, foolhardy enough to undertake the formation of a new Ministry. All the opportunist leaders declined power, in order to bring about a Presidential election. As a last hope he offered power to the Radicals, with complete freedom in their allotment of portfolios. Two meetings were held to discuss the situation, at which were, among others, Clemenceau, Henri Rochefort, and General Boulanger, who, more than once, disguised by a limp and blue spectacles, had paid incognito and unauthorised visits to the capital from his exile in the mountains of Auvergne.

The first of these "historic nights," as they were called, had as its setting a private room at the Restaurant Durand. No one was anxious to take office; so, in the middle of the night, it was decided to send Clemenceau, Rochefort, and Eugène Meyer, editor of *La Lanterne*, to Floquet, and another deputation to M. de Freycinet, to urge one or the other to form a Ministry, and put an

end to a crisis which had lasted nearly thirteen days, and which threatened the life of the Republic.

Towards 4 a.m. the two deputations returned to the smoke-laden private room, each with the same refusal, and both gave the same reason; namely, that Grévy's resignation from the Presidency was certain, and that each of them felt sure of being his successor. Cheered by the ironic result of their efforts, the party continued its discussion and agreed to meet again next night. The number of men attending the next meeting was slightly larger, and again it included Boulanger. While the idea of keeping Grévy in the saddle was by no means attractive to these intriguers, would not a thoroughly Radical Ministry, including Boulanger, prevent the growing prospect of a popular rising, and give matters time to settle down? Some one suggested that Clemenceau should form a Government. It is impossible to imagine a greater gamble than such a combination. Clemenceau, either with his instinctive dislike of office, or because his guardian angel was working overtime, refused, in view of the difficulties of the situation, to contemplate the formation of a Government of his own.

The discussion dragged on without any issue being found. Cup or glass in hand, one solution after another was made by those who had perhaps the courage to do great things, but not the authority, and Clemenceau stuck to his refusal. General Boulanger left the room to interview a caller, who told him confidentially that Comte de Martimprey, a Conservative leader of weight, desired to see him at once on very urgent business. The General, who had just assured his Radical friends that,

in the event of trouble, they could count upon the army, left them—and walked straight over to the other camp, to come to a secret understanding with the Orleanists and the Conservatives. A letter was communicated to him in which the Comte de Paris offered him anything he cared to ask for if he would help towards the restoration of the Orleans dynasty. In him sheer stupidity and low treachery were so mingled that it is impossible to judge where the fool ended and the knave began. He returned to his Radical friends with the promises of the Comte de Paris ringing in his ears. Finally Grévy was abandoned to his fate and resigned.

Jules Ferry, Floquet, de Freycinet, and Sadi Carnot were the Republican candidates. The mere mention of Ferry la Famine, Ferry-Tonkin, led to threats and measures for a Commune. He probably would have had a majority at the National Assembly of Versailles, but so hated was he that it was much more difficult to foresee how he could have returned to Paris had he been elected at Versailles. So Clemenceau saw to the removal of Floquet and de Freycinet from the list of Republican candidates, leaving Ferry, General Saussier (the candidate of the Right), and Brisson for selection by the National Assembly. It was Clemenceau's brutal remark: "Let's vote for the biggest fool," that ensured the defeat of Ferry in favour of Sadi Carnot, the dark horse.

He was a quiet, respectable, colourless bourgeois Republican, in whose period of office Ministers toppled over at the slightest political breeze, and heaven knows the breeze of Boulangism was strong enough to sink a battleship! Tirard, who formed Carnot's first Ministry,

lasted three months, when he succumbed in a debate in which Clemenceau played his usual part.

Then followed Boulanger's fantastic period of glory, when, had he been a man possessed of one-tenth of the qualities of courage and decision which his admirers saw in him, the Republic would have vanished, and France either would have been plunged into civil war or would have embarked upon a provocative course of Nationalism, and upset the peace of Europe. He was backed by the organising force of Count Dillon, whose knowledge of American advertising and electioneering methods was used to great advantage. The General was removed from the army on account of his visits to Paris in mufti and blue spectacles. These visits were suspected by the Government to have conspiracy as their object, but, as a matter of fact, the gallant General only came to see one of his many female admirers, an elderly dame who was known as the "devastated regions."

Although as an officer on the active list he was ineligible to Parliament, he had been triumphantly returned to the Chamber. Using his new-found freedom he began his plebiscite policy by fighting every bye-election. He decided to sit for the Department of the Nord, and immediately made a violent attack upon Parliamentarianism. By this time Clemenceau, from being the General's patron, had become his bitterest enemy. Boulanger had bluffed him at the start of his career, but his subsequent leadership of all the diverse elements opposed to the régime, his frank bid for personal power, made any further illusions impossible. He appealed to such varied and complex forms of discontent

that he was dubbed "the main drain." His secret understanding with the Monarchists obtained their unstinted support. The clergy saw in him a rampart for Church interests. Déroulède and his Ligue des Patriotes thought him man enough to stand up against Germany and Great Britain in matters of foreign policy. Enrolled under his banner were enemies of the monarchically-inspired Constitution, of Parliamentary intrigues and corruption. Boulanger's workers included such socially and politically contrasted women as the Duchesse d'Uzès and Louise Michel, the ex-convict of the Commune; men such as Rochefort and Arthur Meyer; Royalists and Revolutionaries, who are nearly always in favour of some form of personal government; the petites gens who remembered the Siege of Paris, and looked upon the General as their only protector. But Clemenceau, the pure Jacobin, could no longer be duped.

Boulanger's own political views were summed up rather vaguely by "Dissolution, Constitutional Assembly, and Revision." His conversation showed that he wanted, without quite knowing how to set about it, to destroy the political framework of the 1875 Constitution. The country was to be governed by a President and a Council of State, with a Parliamentary machine to record the laws passed down to it. Generals, as was the case with Primo de Rivera's early dictatorship in Spain, were to take the place of civilian prefects in provincial administration.

Throughout France the Boulangist agitation raged. Election after election went in his favour, and it became without any question clear that he was bent upon ex-

ploiting his popularity in order to become a personal power, while his monarchist and nationalist supporters were using him solely as a means of upsetting the régime for their own benefit.

Clemenceau, thoroughly disillusioned in his hopes of obtaining the magic of the General's name for his own Radical party, turned upon him with decisive vigour. Even ridicule could not weaken his sway over the multitude. He addressed the Chamber in terms of the utmost contempt, and when Floquet reminded him that he was not a victorious Napoleon, and that the Emperor had died before he reached Boulanger's age, the remark only inspired another Boulangist song by Victor Meusy, one of the talented rhymesters of the Chat Noir. Another taunt of Floquet that Boulanger had reached the antechamber of power through the sacristy, led to a duel between them, in which the elderly lawyer managed to wound the beau sabreur, who, nevertheless, got all the popular sympathy from a Paris which had lost even its sense of humour in its worship of the brav' Général.

The capital spent its time running after the General's carriage, attending his meetings, and breaking up, cudgel in hand, the growing resistance of the Republicans, who seemed to find no more cheerful method of propaganda than the removal to the Panthéon of the remains of a number of more or less unknown heroes of the Great Revolution.

In all this turmoil Clemenceau bore a notable part in his newspaper, *La Justice*, by public speaking, and by striving to unite all Republican elements against the enemy. He brought matters to the point of peril by

imprudently daring Boulanger to stand for a Paris constituency. Nearly all his electoral triumphs had, up till then, been won in the provinces. The challenge was accepted and Clemenceau, at the head of the anti-Boulangist Republicans, forced through the adoption of a single Republican candidate. After a campaign short but savage, Boulanger beat Clemenceau's man by over 80,000 votes.

On the night of the election, 27th January 1889, Boulangism reached its height. The General had his headquarters at the Restaurant Durand, where he had first conspired with Clemenceau; and there, surrounded by his chief workers, he communicated astonishing bulletins of victory to the frenzied mob of his supporters, who were in complete control of Paris that night. Neither police nor troops, whose fidelity to the Government was distinctly suspect, were to be seen. The General's own bodyguard was supplied by the fighting formations of the Ligue des Patriotes. By eleven o'clock it was certain that Boulanger's name had carried every district in Paris but one. There was a tremendous consumption of champagne, and, while his advisers were urging him to storm the Elysée at the head of his supporters, which would indeed have been an easy achievement, the General himself hesitated. He retired to a neighbouring room to share his triumph with his Marguerite. On his return a youngster of his entourage kept on reminding him that precious moments were passing; that he must strike while the iron was hot, for never again would he have a better opportunity of seizing power. At a quarter-past eleven, at half-past eleven, he drew out his watch

and showed it to the General, whom his victory in Paris had made so confident that he declared that he would be able to overturn the régime by political action alone. At midnight the young man, as he thrust his watch away, murmured: "Too late, too late, the star is fading."

Meanwhile, at the Elysée the wind of panic blew. Many of the Ministers prepared for hasty departure. Others, more courageous, urged the immediate arrest of the new deputy, but finally the more prudent course was adopted of prosecuting the General for having plotted against the safety of the State, and, in order to cut short any growth of Boulangism, it was decided to remove from his hands the plebiscite weapon which he had used, and to make it impossible for a candidate to stand for more than one seat.

Boulanger's decline was as rapid as had been his rise, and in his last speech in France in 1889, he openly avowed his pretentions to personal power. The point to which success might have led him was shown by revelations as to the source of his campaigning funds. While he was still working with Radicals such as Clemenceau, he was being subsidised by the Royalists. Thanks to the intervention of that strange figure, Arthur Meyer, who began as a small speculator on the Bourse, and ended as editor of the aristocratic *Gaulois*, the first contribution to the funds, 25,000 francs, was obtained from the Duchesse d'Uzès, who by the end of the adventure had spent three millions of the fortune she derived from Veuve Clicquot champagne. Another sum of three millions was provided by the Comte de Paris himself. The General had endeavoured to allay the doubts of his

Radical and Republican supporters, and to answer the clamour of "Where does the money come from?" by showing that he daily received contributions from his followers in the provinces.

It was not until 4th April that the Chamber was asked by the Government to suspend Boulanger's Parliamentary immunity. Four days later the Senate was constituted the High Court of France, but the gallant General had not waited for these formalities to be completed, and had appropriately chosen All Fools' Day for flight into Belgium. Boulanger, who had bluffed and tricked so many men, had walked straight into a snare laid for him by M. Constans, an extremely able, if not over-scrupulous, Minister of the Interior, who, by roundabout methods, gave Boulanger to believe that he was about to be arrested. Constans had weighed him up and knew that he was not of the stuff of martyrs. He rejoined Madame Marguerite de Bonnemain in Brussels, where, with the help of his general staff, he prepared, still hopefully, for the coming elections. The Comte de Paris and the Duchesse d'Uzès as his bankers, and Count Dillon as his manager, soon got all the old propaganda orchestra of the early days of the movement in full blast again.

Clemenceau this time was not caught napping. Both by legislation against any form of plebiscite, and by bringing about the union of Republican forces, he prepared to meet what storm might come. The results of the elections showed how deeply stricken Boulangism had been by the failure of the General to seize the psychological moment when, at the Restaurant Durand,

he and his friends were close to victory, and by his ignominious flight to Belgium. Boulanger himself, it is true, won one of the seats of Montmartre, Clemenceau's own old stronghold, but the results as a whole completed the discomfiture of the Boulangists. A few of the faithful made a journey to Jersey, whither the General retired, to persuade him to come back to the arena. After a stormy scene with Déroulède, who had accused him of lack of civic courage, Boulanger replied: "If God Himself were to come to fetch me, I would not go back." Ten weeks after the death of Marguerite de Bonnemain, in Brussels, Boulanger wrote his last manifesto, declaring that it was personal grief that drove him to his death, which he would have liked to find upon the field of battle, and the next morning he was found, shot through the temple, on his mistress's grave.

At the beginning of this extraordinary chapter in French history, Clemenceau, like many another man of the extreme Left, made the mistake of believing in Boulanger. As a flatterer of the Republican régime Boulanger had at first played his part with a skill by which he managed to delude even himself, and there was, as Jean Jaurès in 1889 admitted, a kind of socialism which had taken the wrong turning in its political ideas and methods. Clemenceau, however, was quick to scent the steady development of Boulangism towards personal power, and was able by his vigorous anti-Boulangist attacks to retain intact, and, indeed, to enhance his prestige as the great Radical critic of France.

Labour's discontent with the arid promises of the Republic had led it to back even the romantic General,

in the hope of obtaining social reforms which were greatly overdue. But the six Ministries which followed before Clemenceau was driven from public life by the Panama scandal were inspired by a peace-at-any-price opportunism beside which that of Gambetta assumed the hues of revolution. The Ministerial policy of nearly all of them was "Surtout, pas d'histoires." Anti-clericalism was to be dropped in return for Papal recognition of the Republic, successive Governments declaiming that they had no mandate for the separation of Church and State. All the old parties were worn out by the strain of twenty years of steady fighting, and were all the more ready to unite against the rising tide of socialism, and, while declaring that only in a period of calm could social reform be properly studied, found themselves engaged in bitter fighting with labour, marked more than once by the use of troops in bloody repression.

Speaking of strike-rioting which had cost twelve lives, Clemenceau warned the Chamber that such events announced the arrival of a new body in the world which was seeking power, and with which statesmen would have sooner or later to reckon. "Take care," he said, "the dead are magnificent proselytisers. Hatred dictates no single word of mine, but I declare that the chief factor of our politics today is the preparation of an inevitable revolution; it is the organisation of this New Estate. You have to make up your mind. You must either meet it with violence or welcome it with open arms. The time has come to choose. Leave prejudice on one side; be men, and unashamed. Save our children from the odious heritage of civil war. Save the Republic

which has promised justice to the oppressed, as the Revolution promised freedom. Save our homes and our country, for, if destiny does not allow us to escape from the fatality which weighs upon us, France, when the time comes, will need to have all her children gathered under the folds of the tricolour flag. Where is the heart, and where the arm that would be missing from this supreme rendezvous!"

These Cassandra-like utterances were forgotten in the fury of the Panama scandal.

XI. PANAMA

Clemenceau won the battle of France, but he very nearly lost the battle of Panama. For the first time he was forced to retreat.

Panama, which to Americans is a symbol of skill, efficiency, science, and honest administration, to the French recalls one of the worst scandals of their national life. Panama was a slimy, shifting bog with an all-devouring appetite. Into it were flung the savings of a thrifty nation. It sucked down to shame men of every condition, statesmen of fame, scientists of achievement, rogues and jail-birds of every nationality. The scandal was big enough to have disgusted France for ever with her Parliament. And there can be no doubt as to the rapid triumph of Boulanger had he known that if, in his hour of victory, he had but let it be indicated that he had in his pocket the names of those corrupted by Panama, Parliament would have fluttered down like a house of cards.

At first the Panama affair was nothing but the story of a huge undertaking planned with short-sighted optimism by Ferdinand de Lesseps, who was honoured and admired throughout the world for the construction of the Suez Canal. M. Eiffel, the builder of the tower which

bears his name, and a number of other well-known people and famous institutions, inspired confidence for a time, and the public which had subscribed the capital was kept in dark ignorance as to the fate of its millions. Corrupt management, huge illicit commissions, and more open forms of bribery, devoured the greater part of the money, and it soon became clear that the cost of construction had been under-estimated by millions, and that before anything big could be accomplished something would have to be done to protect white, and even coloured, labour, against the deadly "Yellow Jack."

The promoters, seeing that the situation could not well be worse, decided to raise fresh capital by means of a Lottery Loan. For this Parliamentary sanction was a necessity, and here it was that the Panama affair, from being merely an unfortunate, if in some ways fraudulent, business concern, became a vast scandal. Terrified of the future, the promoters of the scheme placed all their gamblers' hopes in obtaining authority from Parliament to issue their Panama Bonds. Every Parliamentarian who could be bought (140 to 150 was the figure mentioned), every newspaper which could be influenced, sooner or later found one of the band of Panama corrupters waiting for him with a slyly questing smile. The process had begun with the first appeal for capital, but then corruption only sought to satisfy the rapacity of issuing houses and to inspire public confidence in the project by much "puffing." Now it aimed at direct political action as well and tightened the grasp of its blackmailers first upon all Ministers, Senators, or Deputies whom it thought of use. The Company failed in

1891 for the sum of nearly 1250 million francs, and, as a sop to the deluded shareholders, a judicial inquiry was opened.

There was a natural reluctance on the part of the Government to drag so eminent a man as de Lesseps, Grand Croix de la Légion d'Honneur, and a Member of the French Academy, before the Criminal Courts. There was, moreover, the fear of opening up a scandal, which, if it led to anything, would end in bespattering some of their own number and in discrediting them and their supporters, if not the Republic itself, in the eyes of the whole country. All the Boulangists and Reactionaries, smarting under the ignominious collapse of their black-horsed General, savagely prepared to avenge their defeat by fighting the 1893 elections on anti-Panama lines, by devoting all their strength to developing the political aspects of the scandal.

Names began to be muttered; Deputies were inundated by appeals from their electors to urge upon the Government that the abscess should be thoroughly cleaned out. The Government, scared out of its wits, sought by every means in its power to delay irrevocable action by the judiciary authorities, but in view of the increasing stench the "affaire" could not long be buried. All the unhappy wretches involved set about saving their own skins in the ways best suited to their characters. Thus, the Directors of the Canal Company with deep meaning warned the Government that police action could not, in fact would not, be allowed to fall short of a complete investigation of all the Company's papers—a threat of which all the dread import was bitterly savoured by at

least three members of the Government: Rouvier, Minister of Finance, Burdeau, Minister of Marine, and de Freycinet, Minister of War. Every one, official or unofficial, when he failed to obtain security for himself, saw to it that he, at any rate, was not going to be made a scapegoat, and that in his fall he would not be alone.

Baron Reinach, as a Jew, was fair game for the anti-Semite pen of Drumont in *La Libre Parole*. The Baron, who may, it is to be hoped, for long maintain his eminence as the tragic scoundrel, was nominally the chief agent of Panama's parliamentary, journalistic, and financial corruption and extortion. The *Libre Parole* had begun the press campaign against Panama, and the Jew naturally got most of the kicks that were so freely administered. Reinach became first incommoded, and then alarmed. He finally struck a bargain whereby, in return for information as to other aspects of Panama, the newspaper undertook to preserve benevolent silence as to the Baron's own activities in the matter. Unfortunately, there were other, and more powerful, interests at stake which saw no reason to protect Reinach. M. Constans, the same Minister of the Interior who had guilefully frightened Boulanger into flight across the frontier, was a man with ambitions as large as his scruples were slight. He had acquired influence over a Boulangist sheet, *La Cocarde*, the circulation of which, under the stimulus of its revelations, obtained from the Minister of the Interior himself, soared by hundreds of thousands, and provided M. Constans with the means of sandbagging his colleagues whom he distrusted, and of taking over power himself.

Clemenceau watched the rising storm with stiffening sinews. He quite appreciated the tactics which would make of Panama a battle-cry in the coming elections. He knew full well that his jovial brutality in upsetting Ministry after Ministry, in destroying with a quip or a snarl the patient, innumerable cabinet-makers, had not endeared him to Parliament, which was growing restive of his Republican dictatorship, and impatient under the control of its savage shepherd. He knew that if by any chance he could be inveigled into a tumbril, he could count upon the most luxurious accommodation.

Clemenceau also knew that when the storm burst he would inevitably be caught in it, for he was, and had been, in relations with the two great forces of Panama corruption, Baron Reinach and Dr. Cornelius Herz, the latter having been a shareholder in his paper, *La Justice.*

There are many mysteries still in the Panama story. Perhaps, like a recurrent fever, the Yellow Jack will again come out in memoirs or in diaries, and certainly the most baffling mystery is that provided by these two acquaintances of Clemenceau. They were both Jews, both dishonest to the core, cruel in their cynical exploitation of human cupidity, and so accustomed to purchasing men's honour that it was a commodity for which they had almost worked out current quotations. Of the two, Cornelius Herz was the more expert operator, for he would fill in time between buying some poor devil's conscience with a few hundred francs, or a Minister's support with as many hundreds of thousands, by blackmailing his own accomplice to the tune of millions.

Baron Reinach was a German Jew, an Italian Baron. a

naturalised Frenchman, and uncle of Joseph Reinach, then a Deputy. The Baron, before Panama killed him, had made for himself some position as a secret financial adviser to the Republic by assiduously cultivating parliamentary circles and the milieu of successive Ministers of Finance. He busied himself with many big business undertakings, Government contracts, the Southern Railway, and such concerns, in which a broker, however honest, usually manages to make an immoral profit. His parliamentary influence was based mainly upon secret information carefully acquired, and also upon the use, in the furtherance of a new project, of deputies who had already fallen victims to the fascination of his cheque-book in connection with some previous affair—who soon discovered that, once enrolled under the Baron's Jolly Roger, you only left his service at your own risks and perils. Those who found the price of his support excessive were soon made to understand that his machinery was reversible, and that they might find the cost of his hostility prohibitive.

Cornelius Herz was also by origin a German Jew. He went as a child to America and came back as a naturalised American citizen. Maurice Barrès, in *Leurs Figures*, relates fantastic stories as to the beginnings of Cornelius Herz. His first start in France was a post in a lunatic asylum, where he swindled the doctor and dispenser, and made such successful love to the laundress that the girl, as proof of her affection, replaced the initials on the mayor's best shirts by those of her ardent Cornelius. In a lunatic asylum such things are not favoured, and Cornelius went shortly to the United States of America

in search of some easily and cheaply acquired medical qualification. There he seems first to have realised what a splendid and fertile field for quackery the development of electricity had opened up. With the booty obtained from the gullible, he returned to France in time to serve as an army doctor after the armistice in 1871. He was a concession-hunter in the municipal lobbies, and it was in selling a contract for supplies that he first met Baron Reinach.

Both had their strings out in press and Parliament. The Baron had the *République Française* with Antonin Proust, Jules Roche, and Rouvier as Parliamentary force behind it. Herz had *La Justice*, with the support of Clemenceau and Arthur Ranc. Such were the two men. They joined forces over Panama, and soon Herz became the dominating partner, using Reinach, however, to do most of the dirty work. The miserable Reinach lived through agonies of fear, passed through torments of impotent rage, which drained his cheeks of pinkness, his very eyes of colour, in his increasing efforts to free himself from the insatiable demands for money made upon him by Herz, for as the Panama funds reached Reinach his terrifying associate squeezed them out of him. He could keep nothing to himself; Herz even made him give up the collection of odd compromising scraps of paper, the records of men's darker deeds, which formed his blackmailing equipment. Reinach apparently hired an ex-policeman, and got him engaged as servant in his partner's house, with the object of having Herz assassinated when all other ways of obtaining freedom had been explored in vain.

What was the hold of Herz upon Reinach? So long as there was blood in the Baron's veins, his leech would find him profitable. Herz had everything to fear from driving the Baron to extremities of despair, for he would be the first to fall beneath the ruins of Panama. M. Barrès suggests that Reinach earned his Italian Barony by acts of high treason against France which would have led him to the stake, and that the possession of this secret gave Herz his power. Be that as it may, the power was there, and right ruthlessly was it used.

While the *Libre Parole* was keeping Ministers in the cold sweat of panic by the publication of the information given by Reinach as the price of silence upon his own misdeeds, the Baron read, again with weakening heart, on the notice-board of Monte Carlo casino, that the interpellation on Panama of a young Boulangist deputy, Jules Delahaye, had been fixed for the next day and that pressure by Radical members of the Ministry had obtained from the Cabinet a decision to start proceedings against Reinach. Both steps were deferred, and the Baron returned to make a supreme effort. The first thing he heard as he drove through Paris was the howl of the newspaper hawkers, crying *La Cocarde*.

A hasty glance at the sheet showed that he was abandoned by the Republican opportunists upon whose interested protection he had relied, and that, like many others who figured on his lists, they sought by the passion of their respect for virtue, by the violence of their attacks upon their corrupters, to place themselves above suspicion.

The whole hunt was up, following not a scent but a stench. Radicals under Constans saw a chance of

putting themselves in the places held by opportunists; all the Panama forces were bent upon diverting attention from their misdeeds to those of politicians. The Boulangists, anti-parliamentarians of every hue, gloried in the run. There was no more hesitation and casting about. The cry was "View Halloo!" with every prospect of a kill.

The Baron twice before, while the Panama abscess was forming, had left with a friend a closed envelope marked, "In the event of my death, to be handed to one of my brothers." This he again did before setting out upon his visits that night. He found that he had nothing to expect from M. Rouvier, the genial Minister of Finance, nor from his Cornelian-Hearted partner, who already looked upon him as a living corpse. He was given fresh breathing space by a postponement of M. Delahaye's motion until Monday, 21st November, but he knew that warrants were to be issued against him during the week-end. He was advised that the young Delahaye could not be moved by Reinach's ordinary weapons of money and menaces. On the 18th Reinach made a last piteous appeal to Cornelius Herz to save him. Cornelius replied that he was ill and could do nothing. Reinach then turned to the Minister of Finance, Rouvier, and tragically murmured: "It's a question of life or death."

Clemenceau agreed to help the struggling creature. He drove in silence with Reinach to see the Minister of the Interior, M. Constans, to persuade him to call off his men at *La Cocarde*. "On the way there," said Clemenceau, "Reinach was in a condition which aroused my deepest pity. I had not the courage to speak to him."

The Baron had lost all hope. That very afternoon he had succeeded in getting the Government, on pretext of serious news from Italy, to suspend the serving of the summons until Monday. The Chamber had agreed to postpone the Delahaye intervention to the same day. Floquet, the President of the Chamber, who had wanted to confess to the receipt of money for electioneering purposes, had abandoned his intention. He had just declared in the Chamber that never, at any time, had he asked anything from anybody, never received, and never distributed, any funds, when a newspaper friendly to him, which had not heard of the change in the President's intentions, was passing rapidly from hand to hand. A ripple of contemptuous laughter marked its passage, for it stated that in the course of the Session M. Floquet, while Prime Minister, at a moment of national peril, had applied for financial help from the Panama Canal Company! No wonder that the Baron's heart-beats were irregular, that his face had the deceptive ruddiness of blood-pressure, that his speech was barely articulate. He was a man drunk with the stabbing stimulant of ghastly fear. When received by Constans, Reinach fell on to a sofa while Clemenceau and Constans were still standing. Clemenceau explained that M. Constans must be aware of the rumours that he was behind the campaign against Reinach in *La Cocarde*. Constans vigorously protested and turned towards Reinach, who, with all the weariness of death, repeated Clemenceau's remark. "He was," said Clemenceau, "as crumpled up and exhausted with Constans as he had been a fighting and resisting man with Herz."

Constans repeated, in the varied formulae of French politicians, that nothing could be done for the unhappy Baron, thus abandoned because he had not been able to get another six millions to satisfy his leech, Cornelius. Nothing could, in fact, be done. Reinach, without a word, and, according to M. Constans, "seeming rather upset by his reception," rose and dragged himself downstairs. He begged Clemenceau not to leave him, but Clemenceau pleaded that he was expected at home. "He shook me by the hand, and said, as he got into his fiacre, 'I am lost.' I saw that he was a man stricken by death, but I did not know why he was lost. I left him and walked home." The dignity of solitude surrounded his end. He got home to find that the summons would reach him on Monday, and left the house after a terrible scene with his nephew and son-in-law, the ambitious Joseph, who saw his whole career at stake, and, with the egotism of youth, could see no other tragic issue.

Reinach, the once mighty Baron, left his splendid house near the parc Monceau, and wandered like a dog turned out from home. During the night he is said to have called upon two women he kept. Upbraided by his family, avoided like the plague by his friends, this great purchaser of human honour was forced to buy even his last few moments of affection.

He returned home at half-past two on Sunday morning, and when his valet went to wake him, he found one of the family at the door. The Baron had died during the night. Since six o'clock in the morning Joseph had been busy burning papers.

XII. TIGER BAITING

I

The grave alone knows what precise reasons governed Clemenceau's actions and relations with Cornelius Herz and Reinach, how far he sought to save Rouvier and the other parliamentarians arrested, or to encompass their downfall; how far he endeavoured to inflame or to soothe public indignation. No legal charge was ever brought against him. His paper, *La Justice*, had refrained from supporting any of the many assaults made by Herz upon the public purse. In the only division concerning Herz in which Clemenceau voted, he voted against him. Boulangist and National enemies of the Radical leader suspected him of plans for a coup d'état, and indeed more than one man saw in the public nausea aroused by the very word Panama an excellent opportunity of putting an end to Parliamentarianism as practised in Paris.

Déroulède was among the many who pondered these questions and nurtured such suspicions. On 20th December 1892, immediately after the departure of the first batch of the accused Parliamentarians, Déroulède sprang to the tribune, and, under cover of a question as to the nomination of Cornelius Herz to the Legion of Honour, sought to destroy the terror which had for so long fascinated Parliament. The ferocity of his attack

was bound to be to the liking of a Chamber thinned that very afternoon by the tardy passing of Justice, and there were still close upon 140 deputies who wondered if they would be on the next list, and who were convinced that their missing colleagues had been denounced, thanks to Clemenceau. Déroulède declared that Herz's nomination to the Legion, the rapid influence he acquired in France, could only have been due to the support and protection of a French man of power and audacity able to open to him all the political doors of the country's life.

"Well," he continued, "this serviceable, devoted, indefatigable intermediary, so active and so dangerous, you all know him. His name is on the lips of all, but there is not one among you who would name him, for he has three things you fear: his sword, his pistols, and his tongue. Well, I defy all three, and I will name him; it is M. Clemenceau!"

No wonder that Déroulède's impassioned opening: "On such a day, when the sickle of Justice has struck so many heads, it seems to me iniquitous that his head should be respected, and I believe it necessary and salutary, if not to strike at it, at least to brand it," brought the House to its feet in grateful applause. He might be the saviour! Clemenceau remained seated and silent in his place, and suddenly let flash at a remark of Déroulède's a curt "Non!" the reply to which was no less rapid "We'll settle the Ayes and the Noes elsewhere."

When the President had finally persuaded the House that the tribune was not the proper place from which to challenge a fellow-deputy to a duel, Déroulède said that

Herz had put money into *La Justice*, and the fact that search of the files showed that never at any time had the paper supported Herz in his schemes, the fact that it was proved that Clemenceau had never publicly sold anything to Herz, only made the relationship between him and this German naturalised Frenchman all the more mysterious. What had not perhaps been sold to this foreigner in secret? So mysterious was it that one wondered whether what Herz expected for his money was not Clemenceau's assaults upon men in power.

"Cornelius Herz is an enemy agent. It is righ that his accomplices should suffer. Meanwhile, let us mark out for public vengeance the most formidable, the guiltiest, of those who served him."

Clemenceau's reply denying Déroulède's charges was delivered with the pent-up force of a man who feels for the first time the total inadequacy of the duelling system as a means of satisfying a desire for blood, and that hands were meant for more personally satisfying work than the delicate manipulation of the épée. It was only, however, when he dealt with the charge of having favoured the activity of an enemy agent, that Déroulède could see that the terrible tiger who had ruled the political jungle for so long was not invulnerable; that blood gushed from his wounds. "Then," Clemenceau said, with the full strength of his gestures and his voice, "then comes the supreme insult, one I had not thought I deserved from the most relentless of my enemies. I betrayed French interests! I betrayed my country! I brought here to these benches the influence of the foreigner of whom I was the agent! Controlled and ordered by this influence,

as its vassal and serf, I sought by my action in Parliament to create disorder and confusion in my country! That is the charge you have made from this tribune. There is only one reply to make to it. M. Paul Déroulède, you have lied."

Clemenceau had his duel with Déroulède and licked his parliamentary wounds in silence while the Panama trial was in progress. The drama which had begun with the trial of the leprous Baron fleeing to his death through the night became a farce. The accused had time on their side, their nerves steadied down, and they were able to say to themselves with justified hope: "If we only keep up the game, threaten and fight, they won't dare to condemn us. After all, we only lose our honour, which does not really amount to much." Only one of them was tactless enough to confess, and paid the penalty of his naïveté; the other "chequards," to use the word popular as designating those who had been bribed, were, after all, only guilty of a breach of the eleventh commandment.

The "wild men" of Boulangism, Monarchism; the many men who sought in the affair an opportunity of settling old scores, saw their prey slipping from them. No one man wished to place himself at the head of the coup d'état for which the country was thoroughly ripe. Déroulède and Clemenceau together could have achieved it, but between them lay the deadly insult of Déroulède's attack upon the Radical's patriotism.

Delahaye had launched his indictment without proofs and had forced the accused themselves to produce them. Déroulède had without a shadow of proof called Clemenceau a traitor. As the Tiger, although stricken, still lived,

and showed every sign of continuing to do so, an offensive on fresh lines was opened up by M. Millevoye, a Boulangist whose hatred of Clemenceau so blinded him as to lead him to forget about the wisdom of not worrying about proofs of an accusation. As Anatole France has remarked, once you try and prove a charge, your position immediately becomes vulnerable, since proofs are open to rebuttal. Millevoye imprudently offered to produce proofs that Clemenceau was in the pay of the British Foreign Office. They consisted of copies of fourteen despatches sent by the Foreign Office to the British Embassy in Paris. One of these letters stated that "Clemenceau's *alter ego* has just given us [the Foreign Office] copies of all the correspondence (1) between M. Ribot and M. de Reverseaux; (2) between M. Ribot and his Ambassadors in St. Petersburg and Constantinople; (3) between M. de Reverseaux and the Khedive."

The author of the letter expressed his surprise that Clemenceau, so soon after his last unhappy experience, should have been able to be of such great service, and esteemed that he still could be of use "in view of the corrupt and corruptible" people with whom he lived. M. Clemenceau was therefore to be kept on the British Embassy Secret Service Fund list for 1893. The list was the only original document, on a ruled sheet of blue Ministerial paper bearing the Royal Arms. The *Temps*, *Débats*, and various politico-journalistic persons were down for £8600, while £20,000 had been marked to Clemenceau's account in London, and £3600 to M. Rochefort. These documents had been offered for 100,000 francs to the *Cocarde* by a mulatto named Norton,

who was employed in a subordinate position at the British Embassy. Déroulède, while quite eager to hold Clemenceau guilty of any crime, absolutely refused to believe in the treason of his friend Rochefort, and asked who was the T. W. Lister of the Foreign Office who signed the list. Reference to *Gotha* showed that Mr. Thomas Villers Lister was Secretary of the Foreign Office, but that there was no T. W. Lister there. Comparison with an authentic signature of Mr. Lister showed that no attempt had been made even to copy it. This would have been enough to enlighten any men not blindly passionate in their desire to ruin Clemenceau; but after consultation with various members of the Cabinet, it was decided to allow Millevoye to proceed with his attack next day, on the understanding that he was not to read the list, and that he was to suppress a passage in one of the letters dealing with the Behring Sea, as likely to lead to diplomatic troubles.

Déroulède seems to have had his doubts, but if they existed they were overborne. The next morning Millevoye, after a sleepless night, and still suffering from a dose of ether taken to counteract the effects of influenza, was carefully schooled in his part. He was not to read the list or the suppressed passage. He was not to guarantee the authenticity of the documents, but was to ask for a Parliamentary inquiry and to court legal action by Clemenceau.

All the conflicting passions of the Chamber united that day in exulting at the thought that the Tiger had at last been brought to bay. As Millevoye started from his seat to the tribune Déroulède besought him to remember

the limits set to his action. Almost before he had opened his mouth to speak, Clemenceau, who was in a royal-tigerish temper, frenzied for action, tried to force Millevoye to produce his documents. For a time Millevoye kept his head in the growing uproar, above which the shrill voice of Clemenceau could be heard clamouring for the documents and shouting "Liar!" He forgot all his part. Personally he vouched for the authenticity of the letters he was about to read. When he read them, he forgot his undertaking to omit the Behring Sea passages, and drew a disavowal from the Government. Instead of reading a few passages from the correspondence, he read the full text of every letter. With the fixed determination of a man in a dream, he read some of them twice. Contrary to his undertaking, he mentioned that the letters had been considered at two meetings at the Prime Minister's. The Government, seeing that the storm which was destined to destroy Clemenceau was more likely to destroy the Ministry, felt itself obliged to state that it considered M. Millevoye to be the victim of a hoax.

Millevoye, driven hither and thither by the storm, was past saving. Having emptied his despatch case of papers, he was rummaging in his pockets for more papers, when a roar of laughter broke out, led by a regenerated, savage Clemenceau. Millevoye probably never even heard it. Furious with what he held to be the cowardly bad faith of the Government, broken-hearted by Millevoye's awful collapse, Déroulède in his disgust announced his resignation from Parliament and his intention never again to seek re-election.

With the intense cruelty of politicians, Clemenceau still encouraged the wretched Millevoye to produce further proofs. With almost mechanical obedience he read the alleged British Secret Service List, upon which figured Clemenceau and Burdeau, a Panamist whom Clemenceau had pursued with tireless pertinacity.

Clemenceau, no longer the tiger, but now the cynical gavroche (street arab), waved smilingly to his enemy, exclaiming gaily, "Ah! there we are; the two of us." The sitting ended in Millevoye stumbling from the tribune to the sound of mocking laughter and the angry reproaches of his former friends.

II

At Bay

Millevoye had lost the day, but Clemenceau had won no victory. His opponents determined to renew the fight in the elections. They controlled a large campaign fund, and had as eager workers on their side all the important newspapers which had been involved in Panama. Noticeable among them was *Le Petit Journal*. It flooded Clemenceau's constituency in the Var with organised gangs of toughs, which, recruited from the nether-world of Paris, and armed with cudgels, sought to break up every meeting held by Clemenceau. Being only too anxious to divert the public mind from the Panama scandal in which they had all found their profit, either pecuniary or political, Clemenceau's opponents made of Déroulède's accusation of treason, and of the forged Norton documents, the whole of their political

programme. They rightly estimated the shortness of public memory and the adhesive qualities of mud if it is slung about in sufficient quantities.

It was upon Clemenceau, as the paid traitor of England, not upon Clemenceau as the friend of Cornelius Herz, the Panama corrupter, that they concentrated their attack. Clemenceau had always opposed Jules Ferry's policy of colonial expansion in Tunis, Algiers, Indo-China, and Egypt. Why? Because he was paid to do so for the benefit of England. Clemenceau had opposed the Franco-Russian rapprochement, not because he preferred that democratic France should be enabled to resume her position as a Great Power with the support of a free England rather than with that of Tzarist autocracy, but because he was paid to do so by England.

Wherever he went he was accompanied by swarms of jeering men shouting, "Aoh yes!" and whenever he spoke it was under a running fire of "Spik Ingleish." Cartoons showed him leading against France the cavalry of St. Georges, the name given in France to the golden sovereigns of the British Secret Service in allusion to the mounted figure of St. George. He was depicted juggling with bags of British money. He was made to fight the election under the sign of the £, and sterling was weak in French markets in those days.

Clemenceau faced the yapping, snarling chorus courageously, and his speech at Salernes, in which he bared his whole life, with a sense of disgust at the necessity of such revelation, is become historic.

He was fighting with his back to the wall, and while he hit out with pugnacious pride, it is clear from this speech

that, while he discounted defeat, he would never accept disgrace. His bluntly cordial relations with his constituents in the Var had been poisoned by the stream of filth poured upon him from Paris, and his followers, ready as people always are to believe the worst of politicians, wondered, questioned, and awaited a sign. Clemenceau wasted no time in getting to grips with the real problem.

"It is," he said, "the fate of all political men—I speak of fighting men—to be exposed to every kind of surprise, and every kind of attack. Formerly they used to be assassinated—those were the golden days. Today, any infamous weapon can be used against them. When they are attacked, lies become true, calumny is praise, and treason loyalty. What is there more tempting in a democracy, in which every interest and every passion is at war, than to exploit without scruple every incident, and to upset people's minds by the most violent personal attacks? Then all those who may have been feared at any time will have to suffer from the resentment accumulated by unsatisfied appetites, threatened interests, and disappointed hopes. I have read that it honoured a man to be the target of such attacks. It is a formidable honour, which one can only meet if armoured in lofty indifference, capable of enduring without faltering to the end, and for ever facing the enemy until fortune becomes weary and puts men to shame.

"Attacked on every side at once, insulted, blackguarded, abandoned and disowned, I have not weakened under the most infamous insults, and here I stand before you, on whose behalf I have been subjected to these

outrages, ready to account for my acts. I have never spoken to you of myself. For thirty years I have been a fighting Republican. In 1862 I went to jail for the Republic. Since then, ever faithful to my party, I have remained in the struggle with neither truce nor rest, seeking to control the ardour of some, encouraging the spirits of others, always pointing to the enemy with the cry of 'Forward!' I have fought openly under the eyes of the country, ill or well, with good or with bad luck, against Monarchists, Clericals, Reactionaries, however named or disguised. Sometimes for the triumph of our common ideas, I have had to fight Republicans, men who were more numerous and stronger, and, I must acknowledge, extremely ardent against us. How can the Republican party avoid what is the very life of humanity; the struggle between the spirit of stability and conservatism, and the spirit of evolution, progress, and reform? I have the right to say without fear of contradiction that, a stranger to any policy of insults and of hatred, I have fought ideas, and not men; that, attacked, besmirched, and libelled by some Republicans, I have not resorted to the deadly reprisals which sometimes were at my disposal. I also am proud to say that I have never asked anything from my party. I have solicited employment for many people, but never for my own folk. They have nothing to do with the public administration. It is true that I have upset Ministries. More or less disinterested people reproach me with this. What they do not say is that the Moderates, in spite of all, have always clung to the same men, and the same policy of delay. Nor do they say that when they find themselves faced with a

Radical Government they have not failed to overthrow it with the help of the Right. . . .

"By a gross contradiction I am charged with having been always in opposition, and at the same time with having wielded in secret the powers of Government. I have always been in a minority, and I have never refused power, because it has never been offered to me, save when it was inacceptable; when M. Grévy was about to leave the Elysée. It was then that M. Déroulède urged me to accept office as Prime Minister. . . . Throughout a whole night I had to put up with the incoherent objurgations and prudhommesque rhodomontades of M. Déroulède. The plan was simple. Boulanger went to the War Office, and if I were defeated in the Chamber, Déroulède launched the Ligue des Patriotes upon the Palais Bourbon while the army remained shut up in its barracks. What do you think of this great patriot who enlists his fellow-citizens under the sacred flag of patriotism, and who, having Frenchmen at his disposal for the defence of the country, does not hesitate to fling them, without their consent, into civil war? My resistance put an end to such criminal hopes, and M. Déroulède has not forgotten."

After a spirited defence of his action in the many political crises of his career, Clemenceau explained that he had founded his paper *La Justice* to fight for the realisation of the old Radical programme. *La Justice* was a bad financial proposition, but as it was not run for business, he had continued with it. Had he ever been charged with having fallen under financial control? Had any precise accusation been formulated? Calumny

took good care to avoid precisions. People shrugged their shoulders, saying mysteriously the simple words, "Cornelius Herz." "Now that the accusers are themselves accused, now that their disloyalty and bad faith are evident, I might ignore all this. But I'll take great care not to. Honestly I do not exactly know what these people have against me. My shareholders were politicians, personal friends, and men who hoped for a successful financial transaction. That is the case with all newspapers. Cornelius Herz was a shareholder in *La Justice* from 1883 to 1885. A note prepared at the time stated that M. Clemenceau had re-purchased the shares of M. Herz. M. Clemenceau has never recommended M. Herz to any Minister for any business or favour. In the telephone business M. Clemenceau voted in the Budget Committee against the concession's being given to M. Herz."

Continuing, Clemenceau declined to accept any responsibility for any acts for which M. Herz had to answer to justice. All he had to account for was his own actions. M. Herz had come to him with introductions from important people. General Boulanger and the virtuous Déroulède himself had written warm congratulations to him on his promotion in the Legion of Honour. Then, coming directly to the Panama scandal amid the silent interest of his audience, he said: "The Right, the same Right which is today Republican, or nearly so, conceived the great idea of destroying the real Republican party by accusing 104 Radical deputies of having received bribes. Having failed in this effort, our Monarchists became so fond of the Republic that they felt they

must abduct her so that she might be better protected against us. A few months ago it was quite a different story. Thieves and their accomplices—Republican members of Parliament—had ruined the thrifty classes, and by their unscrupulous greed had brought about the collapse of M. de Lesseps' fine undertaking. You have followed the trial; and the verdict, after finding the accused guilty, ended by declaring that they were immune, a fact which led some one to say that 10,000,000,000 francs had been stolen, but there was no thief!"

After showing where the missing money went, Clemenceau dealt with the publicity expenses. Taking the *Petit Journal*, which was the bitterest of the pack at his heels, Clemenceau said that it had blackmailed the Panama scheme in the most shameless manner. The paper started with a ferocious exposure of Panama finance, which made one of the Panama issues a failure. Panama yielded immediately; the *Petit Journal* extolled it to the skies. In order to give his audience an idea of the gullibility of the public, Clemenceau said: "If any one ought to be proof against the financial puff, it should surely be the man who, in return for money, writes an article, the enthusiasm of which depends upon the tariff. Yet in Paris there is a journalist who wrote three articles in favour of the canal at 1000 francs apiece. By the end of the third article he had so convinced himself of the merits of the scheme that he put all his savings into it, and lost his all. From this we can judge how the general public was exploited, and can obtain some idea of the ruin caused by the *Petit Journal* with its 3,000,000 readers. Then, reaching the very height of shamelessness, this dis-

graceful blackmailing sheet has the impudence to play the part of accuser. Even disgust must be weary of the *Petit Journal*."

After an acid etching showing that all the "professors of virtue," especially among the Parisian press who were fattened on Panama money, were now shouting out, "Stop, thief!" and raising a hellish hullabaloo, he said: "It is the classic procedure: the criminals and their accomplices, again in return for money, hope to turn attention from the real accusations, and from the really guilty." Some of those who had accused him were now in jail for common law offences, others had only escaped imprisonment thanks to the Statute of Limitation. "These," he summed up, "are your 'professors of virtue,' and such are the real motives of their fine campaign for honour and probity. The Republican party has not defended itself against this band, of which Monarchists and Clericals are the chorus. Why not? Because the old party which conquered the Republic no longer exists. Today the party is undergoing a transformation —young men have arrived with old men's ideas, and they have no use for old men with the ideas of youth. Hatred, revenge, and other sentiments have come into play. Great was the temptation to settle all political and social programmes at once, and to bring about the reign of virtue by the application of the great divine principle which rules the world, 'Get out and make room for your betters. . . .' I am proud to say that the whole pack went for me with unheard-of rage. It was a good run, long and spirited. Neither hounds nor huntsmen spared themselves. They only sounded the death a little too soon.

"Using every pretext, twisting everything, lying, libelling, forging, a whole band of accusers suddenly arose against me. Everything was laid bare. My life was searched through and through. Nothing was forgotten. I had assassinated Lecomte and Clément Thomas; my rent was paid by the Post Office in the house where I live. I read only a few weeks ago that I have a box at the Opéra, that I spend 200,000 francs a year, and that everything is paid for by the budget. An adventurer, well-known, or rather, ill-known, to the Assizes, found nothing better to do than to fix at 400,000 francs my annual expenses. My life is an open book, and I defy any one to find any other luxury in it than a saddle-horse whose upkeep costs me five francs a day, and a 500 franc share in a shoot.

"I am charged with having obtained unheard-of promotion in the Legion of Honour for Cornelius Herz. I had been involved in his undertakings. I challenged my accusers to bring proof. They have never even tried to do so. Herz was a spy, therefore I was his accomplice. Of this too there is not even the beginning of the trace of a proof. I had wrung fantastic sums from M. de Lesseps. M. de Lesseps with five minutes' evidence before the Assize Court disposed of that so thoroughly that after all these varied and impassioned accusations my name is not to be found in the report of the Committee of Inquiry. Today I will say to you what I have not wished to say before in my defence. M. Charles Bal having offered me shares in the Panama Syndicate, I refused. Another person offered me 50,000 francs, apart from ordinary advertising, for *La Justice*. I re-

fused. This is the man who is accused of venality by the venal! Then there were the millions I had received from Cornelius Herz. Was it three or five? More likely to be five than three!"

Having recalled that the accounts of *La Justice* showed no trace of such payments, that when Herz became a shareholder the paper was in a precarious situation, and Clemenceau had raised money with which to carry it on, he said, throwing wide open the whole of his life:

"I have settled my youthful debts by a loan from a Nantes notary. The debt still exists. Where are the millions? I married my daughter without a dowry. Where are the millions? I moved into my present house six years ago. The furniture man and the *tapissier* have almost been paid off by instalments, but I still owe them money. Where are the millions? Such are the admissions to which are forced the disinterested servants of the Republic. May the shame of this humiliation lie upon those who have made it necessary."

Who, he asked, were the people who had thus hounded him? They were, first of all, the so-called Liberal press, which was glad to do so because of his part in fighting Boulanger; the paid press, the journalists officially gorged upon Panama money, who, in return for a fee, gave the halo of martyrdom to men who had been sentenced as common swindlers; the press subsidised by Panama contractors who had made scandalous profits, men mixed up in affairs, in fact in every "affaire" in Parliament or outside. Just to complete the picture a Republican arose to say that the scandal was aimed against the Republic, and to propose that the only way

to get the better of the hounds was to run with them. It was a pretty spectacle. Some of them longed to make one man responsible for all their disappointment, all their mistakes, all the folly of the past. Others, the famous folk who had converted the Monarchists to Republicanism, were rabid against any one who would not close the road to every adventure. There were the Moderates, soured by impotence, who, with the Boulangists, were foaming against their old enemy. They with the Right, always against real Republicans, made up the clamorous gang shouting, "Your time is over. What about the High Court now? What did you do with Boulanger? Clemenceau; that's the man who has brought about the failure of our policy. He fought against colonial expansion. He is an enemy of France. He has his spies in the Ministry of War. He has upset Ministries on instructions from abroad, and he speaks English."

"Then," said Clemenceau, "the whole gang shouted in chorus, 'Away with this blackmailing traitor, this bandit!' The son of an assassin stated in the Lobbies of Parliament that there was blood upon me. I was finished if I remained silent, and brazen if I opened my mouth. Hooted, vilified, calumniated by a 3,000,000 circulation every day, flouted, abandoned, and cursed to such an extent that some of my old enemies were nauseated, reading in the papers news of my arrest and of my suicide, I wondered if I really had achieved enough in the past to merit these excessive honours, or if I really were so formidable for the future as to justify such a boiling-over of rage. Finally, the last batteries opened

fire; there was proof that I had betrayed my country! The men who had claimed to have this proof were the same who for six months had been accusing me. Treason had been their first cry; it was their last. But the last time they said too much, and were forced to produce the proof of their assertions.

"You know the rest of the story. Their forgeries were revealed, and they themselves had to expose their dishonesty by confessing that they had had to alter their own fraudulent evidence in order to conceal certain names. It would be easy for me to profit from this shameful story, but I don't want to take such an advantage. Three days ago Déroulède, taking refuge in flight, failed to appear at the Assizes, where I had summoned him, and where Millevoye should have been in the dock between two gendarmes. I was indulgent towards the accused, and as damages I only claimed a verdict which would be tantamount to a censure upon Justice, and upon Parliament. . . . The verdict in my favour was the logical, inevitable conclusion of this whole campaign. It could not finish otherwise. What was the result of all these accusations without proof, all these filthy slanders, but to reveal the complete ignorance of those responsible for them? They lost the game. A few still struggled to save their honour, if such a word can be used in this connection. The director of one of the newspapers which most treacherously attacked me sagely remarked that he had set about the business in the wrong way, and that to libel with success it was essential to have no proof. In the same newspaper, a young fellow whose intentions cannot be called bad,

since he has none at all, placidly explained to his friends that they had started too many hares at a time, and that in their forgeries my name alone should have been mentioned."

Shaking his broad shoulders, as though finally ridding himself of the whole affair, Clemenceau continued: "That's enough about myself. The aim of the campaign was to suppress by every possible means every supporter of old Radical ideas. Well, we are still here; and, forgetful of past intentions, leaving personal quarrels out of account, let us examine what is the new policy in whose favour we were to be suppressed. Everywhere people are tired of delays and uncertainties. The Parliamentary machine is beating the air. Straightforward intentions, and a good deal of strength and activity, only seem to lead to inadequate, and sometimes ridiculously inadequate, results. It would be untrue to say that the Republic has done nothing. It is commonplace to say that the Republic has not achieved what she might, and what she ought to have done. People want to get rid of an exhausted Government system. Every one needs definite and fertile action, and every one wants to keep the Republic. The only question is, whether to make of it a preservative of old monarchist laws or an instrument of political and social reformation. There is nothing more natural than that the Republican parties should differ among themselves and organise themselves according to the two tendencies of humanity: the desire to preserve, and the need of change. The Republic will not have taken definite hold of this country, she will not be organised for the life and progress to which her destinies

summon her, until she is able to satisfy both those feelings, the successive manifestation of which constitutes the whole history of humanity."

This moving speech had but a passing purifying action. After the audience had cheered itself hoarse, and the public discussion of the speech had begun, it was clear that much of the mud thrown still stuck to Clemenceau. He failed to get a majority on the first ballot, and, proudly refusing the proffered assistance of the Socialists, he was defeated in the second ballotage. The town was filled with shouting and exultant rioters that night, and the nervous Prefect begged to be allowed to smuggle Clemenceau away in the small hours of the morning, in case there should be an outbreak of real mob violence. Clemenceau curtly replied that he would leave Draguignan in the full light of day, and at his own convenience. Refusing all protection, he drove in the morning to the railway-station in an open carriage under an archway of sound built by the jeering shouts of, "Aoh, yes!" and the hateful cry of "Traitor!"

XIII. THE LONE TIGER

Clemenceau returned to Paris not only a defeated man, but the leader of a party which had well-nigh been destroyed. Camille Pelletan was practically the only Radical of note in the new Chamber. Clemenceau's position, indeed, was desperate. At the age of fifty-two he had to start again the slow process of building up radicalism as a force in the Republic, and to do so with the shining enthusiasm of his youth dimmed by disappointment and delay, and the trust in human faith, which was the basis of all his action, shattered by the cruel stupidity which had labelled him a traitor. Many another man would have tried to hide his wounds in retirement, or would have awaited the favourable opportunity of a bye-election to come to terms with his enemies. Clemenceau, supported by tremendous faith in himself and in the rightness of his policy, upborne especially by a deeper and a higher sense of pride than is given to most men, did not hesitate for a moment.

"So long as I can speak and write," he said to a friend at this turning-point in his career, "so long as I feel that I am right, I am unconquerable." The moral crisis which Clemenceau took thus gallantly in his stride was complicated by material difficulties not so easily over-

come. To a friend who lamented his exit from the political scene, he replied: "You don't know how strong you are when you stand alone." Clemenceau was far from being completely abandoned; he still had a few faithful adherents. But still larger was the number of people who preferred to avoid his company. His most persistent visitors were duns. In spite of England's £20,000 a year, in spite of Panama and Cornelius Herz, those bill collectors and pressing creditors soon appreciated the complete sincerity of Clemenceau's question: "Where are the millions?" He could not longer face the heavy annual deficit of *La Justice.* (Where are the millions?) His immediate problem was to wipe out the crushing debts arising from that venture. Thanks, however, to a friendly loan, and by the wrench of selling his cherished collection of Japanese art, and most of his modern works by Pissarro, Raffaëlli, and Manet, he was able to scrape through without bankruptcy.

There are many ways of overcoming the obstacle of a mountain range across your path. Most people prefer to travel around a peak, along the comparatively easy passes of the foot-hills. Hardier folk will scale the highest passes. Clemenceau, if his road lay over the mountain top, climbed straight at it. There are men in history—they are as a rule significant forces—who, if they are not pressing ahead, feel that they are actually falling behind. Clemenceau was of these few. He wanted to express his thoughts so that they should become translated into action by the great forces of society.

The lone Tiger soon showed his mettle. The sounding-board of the Parliamentary tribune having been denied

to him, he straightway took up his pen and continued his fight for radical conceptions as though there had been no Boulanger and no Panama to interfere with the broad current of his own life. Apart from his early essays in student journalism, Clemenceau had not been until then an active writer. In *La Justice* he made his policy felt more by the choice of his contributors than by any writing of his own. He confined himself to discussing the tone of the paper in artistic, literary, and political matters, with Camille Pelletan, Zola, Stephen Pichon, Aurélien Scholl, and Millerand, to whom was left the presentation of the ideas thus ventilated in a charming atmosphere of intimacy strangely different from the "conference" of the modern newspaper. Clemenceau's own contributions when he was in Parliament usually consisted in an occasional brief, and sometimes initialled, note dealing either with the affairs of the paper as a whole or with some question in which he was involved as director.

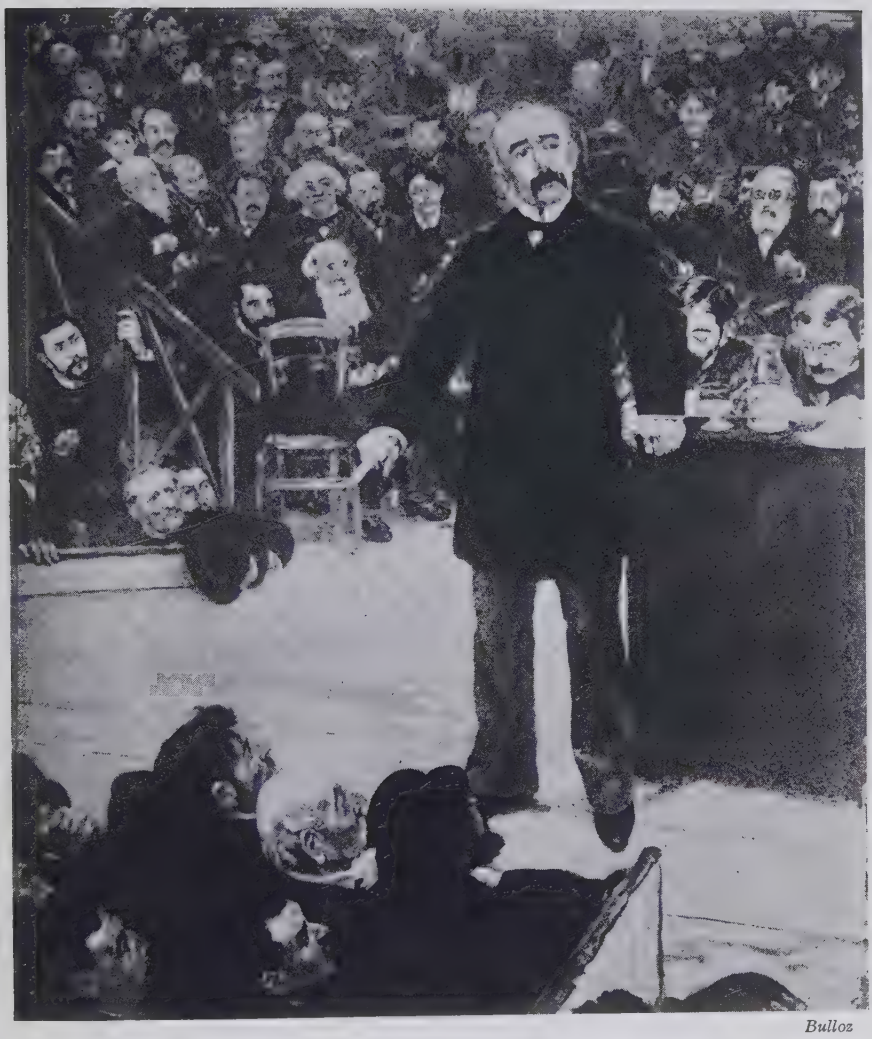
Parliament only knew him as a writer from reports made to the House on behalf of the various Committees upon which he sat. Some of them, in particular those dealing with conditions of coal-miners, were of a literary character usually not discoverable in such official prose, but no one had ever suspected Clemenceau of being the greatest journalist of his time. It may be truthfully said that his dazzling career as a journalist and man of letters only began in the dismal days that followed his disappearance from Parliament.

It was a painful discovery for his opponents. Instead of having, as they imagined, reduced his audience to the

restricted circulation of *La Justice*, they found him filling a larger stage, and speaking without the trammels imposed by time and Parliamentary custom, with greater authority than ever, to an audience which soon spread far beyond France. In most Parliaments it is rare that a member of the Opposition is allowed without interruption to make a logical and well-argued appeal. The opportunities of effective intervention in debate are few and far between. Clemenceau now was able to speak his mind through his paper, and develop his arguments in untroubled serenity. Moreover, he spoke every day.

He wrote upon the fleeting topic as well as on the eternal mysteries of life. He wrote upon the injustice with which life had treated his local grocer, and upon the grandeur that was Greece; of the sordid miseries of city life, and the brave, crisp smell of wood-smoke in the country breeze. His style moved with fascinating deftness from solemn gravity to graceful gaiety, and out of everything touched by his pen, whether it were a comment on a fait divers or a criticism of art, flashed out some illuminating ray or thought-provoking question. His almost fatherly concern for the under-dog was redeemed from mawkish sentimentality by his sense of humour, and by that street-arab impishness which usually takes the form of placing the thumb upon the nose and derisively wagging the extended fingers of the hand, which youth reserves for the pompous humbug who has failed to bamboozle it.

His pen was soon at a premium. The circulation of *La Justice* rose rapidly, and he soon became a regular contributor to the *Journal*, *Echo de Paris*, the *Aurore*,



Bulloz

CLEMENCEAU ADDRESSING HIS MONTMARTRE CONSTITUENTS IN THE EIGHTIES
From a painting by Raffaëlli

which he afterwards directed, *Le Français*, the *Dépêche de Toulouse*, the Vienna *Neue Freie Presse*, *Le Bloc*, and of course his most famous paper, *L'Homme Libre*, where his articles numbered over 1500. His newspaper articles would fill over a hundred octavo volumes of 350 pages. Indeed, his work as a journalist became so important that there were many periods during his life when it was Clemenceau the journalist, rather than Clemenceau the statesman, who really mattered.

Having increased his power during his absence from the Chamber, he did not readily surrender the taste of real freedom he had been given by the press, nor was he anxious to weaken the strength which he had proudly felt immediately after his defeat, when he "stood alone." His constituents soon realised the mistake they had made in failing to elect him and took the very first opportunity of obtaining him again as their Parliamentary representative. Among those who approached him was a man who had been one of his bitterest opponents in the 1893 election, a fact upon which Clemenceau commented with joy, remarking that he had almost forgotten the personal aspect of his defeat, which, after all, had been nothing but an incident in the universal struggle of the weak against the strong. "Since my youth," he continued, "I have been on the side of those who suffered defeat at the hands of fate, and not only fought for them with all my power, but I have even committed myself too lightly, for the sake of our cause, to obligations from which I have not yet freed myself. In the cruel struggle due to the hatred of people in power who felt their domination menaced, I have incurred many powerful enmities, and

I am proud to think I have deserved them. Their coalition deprived me of my legislative mandate, which I would not have given up of my own free will. Now, I may admit that with the link between us broken, I have regained my freedom. Parliamentary life calls for daily collaboration between the electors and their representatives—a collaboration which calls for some sacrifice of independence. As I am now, I have the right to differ from you if I think you are mistaken. Leave me this freedom of will and of action. I shall only use it to show myself worthy of your suffrages in the past. You can easily find some one among you who can, on your behalf, fight for freedom of thought against dogmatic oppression, for social justice against iniquity. And when it is understood that I require nothing of you except the encouragement of your friendship, I will join you again."

There can be no doubt whatever that Clemenceau was wise in resisting the temptation of an easy return to power. By his feverish literary activity he was already playing a greater part in politics than he had ever done as a deputy, and when he re-entered Parliament he wished to do so, not only financially free from the debts accumulated by *La Justice*, but free also from the pressure of any political body, whether it be his constituents or a Parliamentary group. He wished, in fact, to impose himself upon the Parliament which had shamefully cast him forth, and that could only be done by labour, youth, and courage. He spent all three without stint, slowly settling up his debts and steadily building up a new radical platform. Perhaps the Socialists, whose power had rapidly grown, were alone among political parties

in seeing in his return to Parliament a real benefit to their own less individualist efforts at establishing social justice.

In 1897 *La Justice* reached the apparent limit of its capacity. After four years of herculean labour Clemenceau in any case felt that it no longer provided him with a sufficiently spacious battle-ground. He joined *L'Aurore*, and there, in the Dreyfus case, he found a lever ready to his hand—a lever which caused infinitely more upheaval in French life than would have resulted from a hundred Panama scandals.

That drab man Dreyfus coloured the existence of French life right up to the eve of 1914. Only a year before that M. Millerand, Minister of War, was forced to resign for having reinstated one of the actors in the drama, Colonel Paty du Clam. The discussion of the tenebrous mysteries of the affair with its deliberately falsified forgeries, its veiled ladies, foreign and French secret service agents, burglaries, duels, and suicides, divided family against family, ruined life-long friendships, and made the ordinary social life of the country one prolonged, passionate polemic.

XIV. DREYFUS

The Martyr of Devil's Island was not built by nature to be a hero. He was a pale, insignificant, shifty-eyed Jew. George Henty, the journalist and writer of books for boys, went to Rennes convinced of the innocence of Dreyfus. He came back with a very bad impression. "The man," he said, "looked and spoke like a spy. I'll be damned if he oughtn't to be one."

Dreyfus was a highly talented officer, and perhaps took his desire for advancement in his profession a little too seriously to be altogether agreeable to his colleagues of the General Staff. He was above all a Republican Jew, and as such, repugnant to the clique of Catholic reactionaries who dominated the army.

None of these factors was likely to make Clemenceau distrust or despise him. He had been found guilty of treason by the unanimous verdict of a court-martial, after a trial lasting four days, at which he had the ablest counsel for his defence. Clemenceau, like the vast majority of his countrymen, at first believed him to be guilty. Dreyfus had been on his island of torment for three years before, yielding to the steady efforts of the small band of Dreyfusards, Clemenceau began to see behind the obscurity which, for reasons of State, had been

flung over the trial and the evidence upon which Dreyfus had been convicted.

It is hard to find justification for those who attribute to insincere timidity Clemenceau's early silence with regard to Dreyfus. It was true that any newspaper then espousing the cause of the "traitor" would have made a bad financial speculation. There was never a moment when Clemenceau was not prepared to expose his life and his livelihood in a cause which he believed to be just. But he had to be convinced. As it was, when he did enter the fight, he grossly under-estimated its perils, and in no way foresaw that he was mobilising against himself an army of enemies of infinitely greater strength than that which had kept him from power since Panama.

The first point at issue in the case was: had Dreyfus been properly convicted, or had the proceedings been vitiated from the start by evidence which, while communicated to the judges, had been withheld from the accused and his counsel? This simple matter rapidly became a life-and-death struggle between the mystic ardour of Roman Catholicism, the comparative cynicism of Protestantism, and the whole of Israel. Every party in the State was eventually called to one flag or the other, and had to gain or lose by the result of this uncivil war. Clemenceau would have been blind if to the end he had not realised that he had to fight, not so much for Dreyfus, whose ineffective personality had never appealed to him, as for the principles of the Great Revolution in general and those of the Radical party in particular.

Clemenceau, when he first went to the *Aurore*, believed that Dreyfus was guilty, and had indeed given cruel

expression to that conviction. "It seemed impossible to me," he wrote, "that such a sentence could have been lightly passed by officers upon one of their number. Still, I could hardly accept the idea of blunt treason. I supposed that there might have been some great imprudence. I thought the punishment inflicted was terrible, but justifiable on the ground of patriotism." When Vaughan founded *L'Aurore*, he spoke to Clemenceau of Bernard Lazare's collaboration, and Clemenceau stipulated that he should not continue in the paper his courageous campaign for the rehabilitation of Dreyfus. When Ranc, shortly after his first number had appeared, mentioned Bernard Lazare, Clemenceau exclaimed: "Ah, yes. We all like him for his talent, but we've insisted upon his leaving us in peace with his Dreyfus." Ranc exclaimed: "What! But Dreyfus is an innocent man." Clemenceau replied: "In that case he is the victim of the greatest crime of the century." "Precisely so," said Ranc, who told him to consult Scheurer-Kestner. From this highly-respected Alsatian's documents and information, Clemenceau was able to convince himself not that Dreyfus was innocent (his eyes were not finally opened until the Zola trial), but that Dreyfus had not been given a regular hearing.

At that time only the immediate family of Dreyfus, and a very few intimate friends, were fighting for a revision of the trial, because they believed as an article of faith in the complete innocence of the Devil's Island prisoner, who, to them, was a victim of the cruel Christian charity usually inflicted on their suffering race. It was right and proper that they should refuse to believe in

the guilt of a member of their family and a representative of their race. They believed him innocent, and it was only towards obtaining the proof of his innocence that their patient labours had been devoted.

Upon Clemenceau none of these sentiments had any claim. He believed Dreyfus guilty, and not until many years after did he find any reason to alter his view. What first stirred him into action was the demonstration by Scheurer-Kestner that the conviction of Dreyfus had been obtained by a breach of the law. He would not admit for a moment that a man, even if guilty, should be convicted by illegal methods.

Clemenceau has frankly admitted that he did not for a moment contemplate the desperate resistance he would encounter. He foresaw the opposition of the General Staff, supported by the Church. "But," he wrote, "it seemed to me that once the facts became known, a general imposing movement of public opinion would at once lead to all-round justice being done."

The all-important fact to Clemenceau was not the guilt or innocence of Dreyfus, but his conviction *in camera* on the evidence of documents which, for reasons of State, were shown to the military judges and never communicated to the prisoner or his counsel. The fight was that of justice against such iniquity. He had thought in his naïveté that the matter could lead to no great upheaval; that once a demand for the revision of the trial was based solely upon the illegality of the proceedings, it would immediately be granted.

He had to fight daily for over two years before a retrial was obtained, and it was long before then that he

realised the forces ranged against him. When he wrote the preface to *L'Iniquité*, the first of seven volumes containing his articles on Dreyfus, he saw the problem in its vast general proportion. "France," he wrote, "is passing through the agony of unheard-of human tragedy. Doubtless judicial errors go back to the days when man first judged. But has one ever before seen a whole people involved, as are the French today, in the tragic action of justice against iniquity? How often has not man been unjustly condemned? It has been, and will again be seen. It is an everyday occurrence that laws are violated by those to whom their defence has been entrusted. Social cruelty raging against its victim is but the ordinary effect of anonymous cowardice, of interests in power. But when, with the accused and his judges, established order is at stake; when, behind them, great social forces are at grips; when Right's only strength is that it is Right; when the administration of justice threatens to collapse; when individual conscience sees the formidable apparatus of State reared against it and supported by the lack of conscience of the many; then everything becomes greater, assumes immeasurable proportions, and the struggle lifts itself to the plane of a legendary epic in which figures the whole of humanity. The victim then, however great the pity he may inspire, becomes a living symbol of all our weaknesses of mind and of heart. This fugitive representative of an unjust human justice suddenly becomes a synthetic witness to all past iniquities against the whole power of a social domination which sees itself threatened by the restoration of real justice. . . . The religion of charity flourishes its sword and says, 'Woe to

the Jews!' The spirit of military caste cannot admit that force shall be subject to reason. Dogmatic authority and the strength of the sword, implacable since they are infallible, bar the way to freedom. Iniquity is an immense power against justice, which only seeks to be; despotism settles upon the law, falsehood upon truth, and thought is overwhelmed by force."

This was a quarrel, this a cause, worthy of Clemenceau's pen.

Throughout the Republic army officers had remained a body apart from the ordinary broad currents of social change. Even up to the Great War there were still not a few traces of this gap between the officers' corps and the general public. Many of the older families, when Dreyfus was first arrested, were ardent enemies of the Republic, which they consented to serve in the only gentleman's profession left open to them: that of bearing arms. The military caste was essentially Catholic, and the General Staff upon which Dreyfus was serving at the time of his arrest was so "black" that it practically formed a secret society within the Republic; and, like most secret societies, it could not afford to admit that its chiefs could possibly share the common human guilt of even occasional error. Nearly all the higher commands of the army were in the hands of such men, some of whom were carried by their ardour to crimes of which fanaticism is perhaps the kindest explanation. Once the mistake had been made of condemning Dreyfus they resorted to every crazy device which despair could prompt to bolster up their error. Document upon document was forged or suppressed to maintain the dogma of the in-

fallibility of military justice and the leaders of the army. One Minister after another in the same spirit of solidarity had to condone the actions of his predecessor.

Criticism of their procedure was not tolerated, and officer after officer, taking shelter behind the orders of his superiors, refused to answer the famous question whether a document had been communicated to the judges at the trial and not to the prisoner or his counsel. The Méline Ministry, the Minister of War, General Mercier, General de Boisdeffre, Chief of the General Staff, and countless others did the same, invoking the interests of national defence as the cause of their silence.

Dreyfus, with his effaced personality, even his sufferings on Devil's Island, disappeared in a swirl of passion, and a correct entry of the affair in the Law Lists would have read: Zola, Clemenceau, Jaurès, and others *v.* Reasons of State. It took five years to wring from reluctant justice official confession that a document had been illegally communicated to the judges. In dragging this admission from the Courts, Clemenceau had the fervid assistance of the great Socialist, Jaurès, of Scheurer-Kestner, and a band of devoted writers and lawyers. But it was Emile Zola, in close collaboration with Clemenceau, who made the first gap in the enemy's defences. The breach was made at a time when the Dreyfusards' stock was very low. They had failed to establish that Esterhazy had committed forgery on behalf of the General Staff, and the country was almost solidly behind the military in upholding the guilt of Dreyfus. Then Clemenceau published Zola's open letter to President Félix Faure, placing the whole case limpidly before the

public in accents of burning conviction. It was Clemenceau who, by a stroke of genius, furnished the heading: "J'accuse!" The Government could not but grant Zola's request to be brought before the Courts for libel, and in those proceedings began the trial of the men whom Clemenceau had dubbed "The Machiavellis of the Folies-Bergères."

XV. REVISION

Zola, Clemenceau, and the other Dreyfusards now exulted. They felt that the lists were open, and, as the libels of "J'accuse" were widely enough distributed, they felt confident in their ability to ventilate, and this time before a Civil Court, the whole of the affaire Dreyfus and to force the Government to consent to re-open a settled case. Both the Government and the General Staff, however, saw the danger, and limited their action to those portions of the libel referring to the Esterhazy trial. Maître Labori appeared for Zola, while Georges Clemenceau, by permission of the Court, and Maître Albert Clemenceau, his brother, undertook the defence of M. Perrenx, the manager of the *Aurore*.

By then life in Paris had become nothing but an orgy of passion. Deputies fought each other freely in Parliament, lawyers struggled in the Courts, face-slappings and duels were the order of the day; the Church became militant, the General Staff Jesuitical, and pacifists bellicose. Forgeries and counter-forgeries poured into the newspaper offices from both sides. Rioting was a common occurrence and there were even mild pogroms in various provincial cities. Paris was almost entirely anti-Jewish, anti-Dreyfusard, and anti-Zola. It firmly be-

lieved that behind all the agitation in favour of the Devil's Island prisoner lay a treasonable machination of Germany. Déroulède, with his noisy *Ligue des Patriotes*, again became master of the Paris pavement, Zola and his counsel had to be smuggled in and out of the Law Courts in order to save them from the mob.

The military won their case but lost their cause. That the Court was determined upon a conviction was evident from the start. Refusal met Maître Labori's request that the Court should require the attendance of certain unwilling witnesses. Some officers in giving their evidence obeyed orders from their superiors: nearly all of them refused to answer Maître Labori, and the Judge disallowed question after question put by the defence. Major Esterhazy, now openly charged by the Dreyfusards with having forged the famous document which led to the conviction of Dreyfus, listened without reply to a number of questions put to him by Georges Clemenceau. The Staff clique felt that its position had been undermined by ceaseless campaigning. It alone was able to appreciate to what free use of forgery, intimidation, and secret agents it had resorted in its attempt to justify the conviction of Dreyfus, and it alone knew how necessary silence had become if the fair fame of the army was to be kept unstained. Despite all the despair of their efforts, more than one man in Court acquired the dawning certainty that if there had been a traitor it was Esterhazy, and not Dreyfus, and this feeling revealed itself in a marked manner by the refusal of many of Esterhazy's brother officers to remain on speaking terms with him.

It was from the aspect of the innocence of Dreyfus that

Maître Labori argued his case. He did so with all his great forensic powers, but without perhaps making the more permanent appeal based by Georges Clemenceau on the irregularities which it was now seen had been committed at the first trial. Clemenceau, without worrying much about Dreyfus, had accepted the original verdict as being, if anything, too mild. He had thought it perhaps better to put a traitor to death than to allow him to continue his life, peacefully growing coconuts in Devil's Island. It was not until during the Zola trial that he began to believe in the actual innocence of Dreyfus. He took no part in the earlier agitation until it was shown him that a man had been condemned unheard, and upon charges unknown to accused.

In such a cause Clemenceau heard again the trumpets calling him to battle for elementary justice; and the fact that they also summoned him to fight against his inseparable enemies—class privilege in the guise of an aristocratic military force, and the reactionaries of religion and politics, for ever seeking an opportunity to overturn the Republic—made him all the more ardent if slightly less personally disinterested. To him Dreyfus himself meant nothing. While Zola, plunging from Naturalism into pure Romanticism, passionately declared: "Dreyfus is innocent! I swear it on my life, and pledge it on my honour!" while Maître Labori saw the centre of the whole drama in the martyr of the Ile du Diable; to Clemenceau the all-important fact, the fact that automatically must bring about a new trial, was the fact of a document having been privately communicated to the Court. This was the whole burthen of his formal

speech in defence of the *Aurore*. "Think what it means," he asked the jury. "A man can be convicted, and he himself, his wife, his children, his father, all his friends, can be covered with shame and for ever seared on the strength of a document he has never seen. Who would not rise up against the very thought of being condemned in such circumstances?"

Nobody, he continued, could possibly admit of such a travesty of justice. That prejudice of a violent anti-Semitic nature had pursued Dreyfus from the beginning required no further proof—indeed it required no proof at all. It was not necessary to test the accuracy of the evidence upon which Dreyfus had been found guilty. What could not be admitted for a single second was that a sentence could be passed on the strength of evidence kept secret from the accused himself. That alone justified the demand for a new trial. If during the proceedings it was proven that even this secret evidence was a forgery perpetrated by the real Prussian spy, Esterhazy, what then would be the position of the army chiefs who, knowing full well that public opinion would exact the truth, had plotted and conspired to protect Esterhazy and sought to ruin Colonel Picquart because he had stumbled on the light?

After an examination, almost surgical in its incision, of the philosophical and political aspects of the case, which showed the noble spectacle of a people sitting in judgment on itself, Clemenceau concluded, and turning to the jury said: "It is not so much we as yourselves you have to judge. We appear before you, but you will have to answer to history."

Zola, Labori and Clemenceau knew that they had lost the day. The Court filled with the angry hum of hostility as Clemenceau sat down, and through the windows came the savage shouting of the waiting crowds: "Vive l'Armée; A bas Zola; A mort les Juifs."

The Court condemned Zola to a year's imprisonment, and Perrenx, the manager of the *Aurore*, to four months. Their appeal was dismissed, and Zola, on Clemenceau's advice, fled to England.

Reaction had apparently triumphed all along the line, but events rapidly showed that a wide breach had been made in the defence of the army clique, and, the weaker the army's position became, the more desperate became the means of its defence. Army officers who had shown the slightest leanings towards impartiality were subjected to the untempered wrath of their superiors. Colonel Picquart was imprisoned. Cavaignac, the Minister of War, frightened even his Cabinet colleagues by calmly proposing that all the chief Dreyfusards, including Zola, Clemenceau, Jaurès, and Maître Labori, should be charged with plotting against the State.

Cavaignac soon discovered that things were not as simple as they seemed when Colonel Henry confessed to having forged, under the inspiration of "esprit de corps," one of the chief documents against Dreyfus. His suicide in prison, and the flight of Esterhazy, were followed by the resignation of the Chief of the General Staff, and of the Minister of War himself.

Very slowly the barricades of false testimony and forgery, behind which the General Staff interests were entrenched, crumbled under Clemenceau's daily bombard-

ment from the *Aurore*. Hardly a month passed that he did not, with his fiery logic, still further weaken the position of the army chiefs. Convictions faltered, opinions changed.

The army leaders, honest according to their lights, were no match for the "intellectuals" they despised. The army itself was popular as being a reflection of the people. But gradually the blind stupidity of its leaders began to differentiate between the interests of the army and those of the people. The Jesuits actively engaged in the affair were far from displaying the cold, calculating cunning with which their Order is usually credited. They gave to the campaign not only a definite anti-Semite character, but also aroused against themselves the powerful Protestant families of France, and all free-thinkers. Déroulède, and the other anti-Republican forces which had fought for Boulanger, mobilised against Dreyfus. People began to see that, instead of the fight being one for the honour of an army officer or of the army itself, it was a renewal of the old struggle of reaction against the Republic.

"La Verité est en marche!" Zola had exclaimed at his own trial. It was not only moving, but gathering speed as well. The dramatically sudden death of President Félix Faure at the Elysée considerably helped matters forward. Clemenceau, who had placed Sadi Carnot at the Elysée in 1887, was quick to take his chance. While politicians were still talking and hesitating as to their candidate, Clemenceau came out with a head-line right across the page of the *Aurore:* "I Vote For Loubet," and settled the matter.

Loubet's election was held to be an insult to the army, as he was mildly in favour of a re-trial of Dreyfus.

Déroulède, with his attacks upon the new President of the Republic and by his ill-considered effort to launch the army into a coup d'état, showed the masses what lay behind the agitation. First the Socialists arose in defence of the Republic, and the movement spread with great rapidity throughout the Republican parties. Revision became certain, and even then the army was reluctant to give up its victim, and the Rennes Court-Martial brought in the impossible verdict that Dreyfus was guilty of treason "with extenuating circumstances." Eventually, nine years after his conviction, the High Court completely rehabilitated him.

Three years earlier Clemenceau had again entered Parliament as Senator for the Var division, which had flung him out in 1893. He was over sixty, his children were married, he was divorced from his wife. He had made a few friends whose feelings of affection not even his cruel irony, his jovial brutality, could impair. The path of his life was beset with men burning to avenge wounds inflicted by his rapier tongue and the defeat of causes, or aflame with the zeal of the mystic against the impious free-thinker. Yet by his pen he had fought his way to a power seldom enjoyed by any Minister. Even his friends had begun to despair of his future. While he was as destructive as a whirlwind, there seemed to be no means of turning his tremendous gifts into creative channels. He was the Peter Pan of politics, and remained in the destructive stage of savage boyhood, pulling his toys to pieces to see how they worked, until 1906, when, for the first time, he accepted office in a definitely Radical Cabinet under M. Sarrien.

According to story the new ministers had shared all the important portfolios between them when Clemenceau arrived at their informal council. M. Sarrien, on greeting him, offered him something to drink, saying: "What will you take?" Clemenceau, intent upon the business in hand, immediately snapped out: "I'll take the Interior," and old Sarrien, who had marked this office for himself, had to agree to this eleventh-hour alteration. In choosing this office in which to make his *début* as a Minister, Clemenceau displayed his customary courage. The new social and political factor of Labour, whose advent he had prophesied, was become clamorous in its demand for recognition.

Under the leadership of Jaurès Socialism had grown into an active political force. Labour throughout the country was astir and eager to come to grips with Capitalism. Strikes were of increasing frequency. Clemenceau, after a very brief apprenticeship to office, formed his own Cabinet on 25th October, 1906, and retained the portfolio of the Interior. He showed, by the creation of a Ministry of Labour which he entrusted to an independent Socialist, René Viviani, the importance he attached to social questions. The country awaited with interest Clemenceau's practical handling of realities which he had, up till then, treated with the detached loftiness of a philosophical critic. He was Prime Minister for two periods only, and on the first, as on the last, occasion, events more than once forced him to acts whose only justification was to be found in the principle of necessity knowing no law.

When he first assumed office under M. Sarrien he was

immediately called upon to deal with strikes and disorders, following upon a disaster at the Lens pits which had cost the lives of 1180 miners. These mines were known to be as dangerous as they were prosperous. In forty years profits had risen from 50 to 1000 per cent., and the management had neglected to take the most elementary precautions for the safety of the pit-workers. The strike followed the usual course, and the country wondered, as matters grew rapidly worse, how far Clemenceau, the critical Radical, friend of the under-dog, protector of the weak minority, would find it possible to put his preaching into practice.

Writing some years before, in *La Mêlée Sociale*, of a similar situation he had said: "Can't you see a Minister going off on his own and saying to the Companies, with his hands in his pockets, 'You only live on privilege. In the interests of civil peace, which I have to protect, in your interest even, you will make what concessions I think fit to propose.' Then, turning to the workmen, he would say: 'Comrades, we are all of the people; those who govern and those who are governed. I will do my best to obtain for you what is necessary. But you must help me!' This will not happen. The Ministers will remain at home. Who will there be then to throw himself between the two camps and speak a word of sense and peace?"

Well, Clemenceau went unprotected to Courrières, spoke to the hostile strikers, promising that troops would not be used save for the protection of property and in the defence of the right to work. The troops were ordered to abstain from the use of arms whatever happened, and right nobly they followed those instructions. One officer

was killed and several men were wounded before a settlement was reached. That timidity was not the source of Clemenceau's handling of the Courrières strikes was rapidly shown in the course of the next three years, when the greater part of Parliament's attention was devoted to the progress of the Labour movement.

Clemenceau, however close to the Socialists he may have been in the results to be achieved by political action, differed profoundly from them in the means to be employed.

In a memorable debate with Jaurès he made clear his own conceptions of freedom. The Socialist leader, with his impassioned eloquence, which at times seemed to become a spate of mere resounding words, nevertheless painted a charming picture of collectivism leading to Socialism, and class warfare giving way to peaceful co-operation. A surprise strike of the electrical services had plunged Paris into darkness just as night was falling, and Clemenceau the Minister and the home-returning working population both went where Moses was when the light went out. Clemenceau, who had known nothing of the decision of these "modern Joshuas," immediately mobilised the sappers, and the army carried on. "Here," said Jaurès to Clemenceau, "you are violating all your principles. You are using the army against men on strike. The only action would have been for the State to take this public service out of the hands of grasping private enterprise."

Jaurès spoke eloquently of common effort for the common good, allaying the conflict of classes by collectivism. Clemenceau, who privately commented that the trouble

with Jaurès was that all his speeches were couched in the future tense, stuck to the facts of the case and the concrete criticism levelled against him. He refused to follow Jaurès into the lofty regions of prophecy. "I am forced to stay in the valley," he said, "where the events which Jaurès has omitted from his picture are occurring. That explains the difference in our points of view."

He, Clemenceau, had never attacked the labour classes. He had gone to Courrières to protect the first of his Trinity,—Liberty. Developing his idea that great social or political transformations could only be realised by the evolution of the individual, he declared: "All of us have to learn liberty. Education is effected not by words, but by deeds. The workman will qualify for the responsibilities of Government when his acts are in harmony with law. If administration could be learned from speeches practical politics would for centuries past have been governed by the Sermon on the Mount."

As Minister of the Interior he could only deal with each case on its merits. The Republic meant freedom for the individual in so far as such was attainable. It was his duty to ensure freedom without inflicting suffering upon any class of the population. The right of men to strike, of the individual to combine against oppression, was admitted. But were non-strikers to be denied the freedom to work? Were agents of existing law to be assaulted in the performance of their duty? He challenged Jaurès to say what other course of action he would have followed had he been in power, and Jaurès could give no reply.

At the end of this four-day duel, Clemenceau remarked

to Jaurès: "After all, you are not le bon Dieu, Jaurès," to which Jaurès replied: "And you are not even the Devil."

The worst disturbances with which he was called upon to deal broke out in the wine-growing south, owing to widespread adulteration, a glut of wine, and a corresponding slump in prices. As the Government could, or would, do nothing to save the peasants from ruin, they refused to pay their taxes. M. Albert, a man of the soil, became their inspired leader. Peasants and labouring men joined forces and were egged on by the reactionaries to overturn the unjust Republic. Troops had to be called out to prevent the whole countryside's being given up to anarchy. The soldiers for a long time did not reply to the constant attacks made upon them, but were finally ordered to fire upon the anarchist mob, which had been using its revolvers freely against them for days. Some of the troops mutinied and joined the strikers. Barricades were erected, public buildings were destroyed. Finally M. Albert, the venerated leader of the vignerons, came to Paris to negotiate with the Government. Clemenceau received him with an open mind, and the next day Albert returned, to find himself branded as a traitor among his own people by a report to the effect that Clemenceau had jovially insisted upon the Republic's paying his hotel bill, since he was in Paris on the country's business.

The rioting, with its steadily rising casualty list, the military mutinies, and the way in which the Government had allowed itself to be overwhelmed by events, led to a menacing situation in Parliament, which Clemenceau met with his usual bluntness. The Government had sent troops with orders that they were only to be used in the

last extremity. But no Government could allow its authority to be usurped by a Winegrower's Committee, or its tax collectors to be interfered with, or remain inactive when 300 Mayors, by resigning, brought the official business of the community to a standstill. No Government could stand mutineers' being applauded by the mob.

"I could have resigned," Clemenceau said. "I don't want office, but when the army was attacked I felt it my duty to remain." This speech, and the sanity which comes even to desperate men when they find themselves on the brink of the irrevocable, gained time for a settlement of the question.

But he was pursued throughout his term of office by labour troubles. Just as he failed to realise in his student days, when he talked with working men in the Faubourg St. Antoine, that the practical side, and not the philosophical aspect of Socialism, appealed to them, so, in later years, he could not understand the vision which saw life as class warfare and had, as the main plank in its programme, not so much Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, as shorter hours and higher pay. It was his fate to be in office when the new force was first trying its strength, and to come into constant clash with it. In each of the many strikes he had to handle he applied the same method: he sent troops to preserve order and to protect freedom of labour, or, as the Socialists saw it, he sent troops to cow the strikers, and to protect blacklegs in the interests of Capital. In a great many of these strike disturbances there were men killed and wounded, and few men have been so well hated by the labouring classes

as Clemenceau, whose great desire it was always to relieve suffering, to fight injustice, and to help the ill-equipped lower working classes in their fight against the efficient forces of Capitalism when they sought a ruthless advantage. Clemenceau had much of the dictator in him. He was impatient of criticism, ferocious in attack; but, being in spite of his reputation a man of Government, he governed.

The end of his first Ministry was characteristic. Delcassé, who had carried on a Moroccan policy without due regard to the naval and military strength with which the country could support it, had been forced out of office practically at the behest of the German Emperor. During a debate on the condition of the navy, which was deplorable, an old feud flared up when Delcassé made an open attack upon Clemenceau, reminding him that he had been a Member of the Naval Commission of Inquiry, and could not escape responsibility. The attack was, after all, justified. It was delivered with bitter personal venom, and followed by a House delighted to see the great baiter of Ministries himself in the stocks.

Clemenceau completely lost his temper and, breaking into a personal onslaught upon Delcassé, revealed a number of facts as to French unpreparedness for war, which completely turned the Chamber against him. After his defeat he recovered his serenity of mind at once, and remarked with his old bitter humour: "I have upset every Government—even my own."

All this fight between the Liberty, Equality and Fraternity of the late eighteenth century, and the harsher, more practical concepts of the twentieth century social-

ism imported from Germany, is now an old story. The battlefields and war-cries are changed, but men after all still rebel against the negation of freedom which the collectivism, both of Capital and Proletariat, is seeking to force upon the world, with much the same methods, whether they be used by Henry Ford, Lenin or Mussolini.

Clemenceau's social policy was governed by unswerving fidelity towards the Revolution, in which he may almost be said to have been nurtured, and his impatience with any one who ventured to dispute for a single second that the whole of political happiness was summed up by the three words: Liberty, Equality, Fraternity; or that the French Revolution formed a single block. He had warned the Chamber at the time of the Carmaux coal-miners' strike that a new social fact had arisen, which would either have to be welcomed and encouraged, or outlawed and crushed.

He was no believer in dreams, and he never allowed his sentiments to cloud his reason. His philosophy offered cold comfort, but an ardent pride led him to struggle even against his own conceptions of life. To him existence was a tragic process of natural evolution, which, whether it be a man or a lily in Monet's garden at Giverny, blazed up for its little moment of fire and of beauty, and then sank back into the darkness of death and decay. Such was his pessimism. Man's greatest pride to him was that he had been a man, and a part, if barely microscopic, of the vast evolution of nature, a fighter in the colossal cock-pit of existence. To him all social ideas which were founded in property and prosperity rather than in man himself were wrong in their origins. He carried his individual-

ism to the brink of philosophical anarchy, and declared that it was useless to expect any real reformation of society until man had been educated up to a point which made any such social legislation superfluous. To man, to whom he shows a picture of centuries of struggle and suffering leading only to the grave, he can only say that, having nothing, and being in no way responsible for the ordering of the universe, he can offer nothing but the pride of having raised himself above the welter of the world to dream, at least, of a justice and tenderness not to be found in the cruelties of nature.

But all the proud magnificence of Clemenceau's sincere lack of faith could not fill the stomach of a single hungry striker. The Socialists, Jaurès in particular, tried hard to woo him to their side. He was in agreement with them on many points, indeed on some he went beyond them on the road to reform. He had, as Minister, begun the programme of Nationalisation with the State purchase of the Western Railway, an experiment from which the idea of State ownership has not yet recovered, but Clemenceau knew, as a man of the soil, that, so long as the French peasant remained, any hope of nationalisation of the land was doomed to failure.

There was perhaps another reason for his refusal to join the Socialists, a reason which also explains his own intense relief when he flung himself out of power in 1909.

He had for long been in a strange position, from which he completely dominated politics. In his independence he had for years said exactly what he thought, attacking, not always his enemies, but those men who looked up to him, with all the outspoken frankness of a man who has

only himself to consider. The idea of placing himself under the jealous surveillance of the budding Socialist party was repugnant to him, and the parliamentary opportunism he was obliged to practice as Prime Minister, to keep his Ministry united and his majority assured, was, in every way, distasteful to him. He was of the stuff of dictators. He could not, in the ordinary circumstances of peace-time politics, act with full freedom; it needed the crisis of war to reveal him as one of the great world forces of History.

XVI. CLEMENCEAU AND GERMANY

It would have been difficult to find a man less jingo in his speech and attitude towards Germany than Clemenceau, or one whose reasons for hating Germany were more personally vivid. He belonged to the generation of defeat. By mentality and upbringing he was the antithesis of the German, who reduced everything, even the fine dreams and noble aspirations of man, to scientific exploitation.

The astounding strength of Clemenceau was in his persistent struggle towards the stars of heaven, whose existence he denied, solely for the joys to be found in striving. He had no wishy-washy sentiment to support him. Labels such as "uplift" and "service" left him unmoved, or at best looking behind them for a self-interested motive. Even the threefold slogan of his Great Revolution he felt to represent unattainable ideals. He was one of the founders of the League for the Protection of the Rights of Man, and yet he placed Right among the divinities unapproachable by man, and accepted Dr. Le Bon's definition of right as being a force which persists. Principles were shining with beauty when they were enunciated, but grew sombre when they had to be applied. In the strenuous moment when men had to pass from ideas to deeds all his brilliant word-bubbles

burst as they came into contact with reality. Christianity had heralded peace on earth, and yet man, unchanged in the depths of his being, had kept alive war and hatred, and even the French Revolution while she was raising her altars to Liberty was building scaffolds. Nevertheless, Clemenceau believed in the power of right, with a reservation that he would keep his powder dry. Germany (again to follow Clemenceau) refused to see anything in right but might, and, confident in her ability to enforce her will, went to war with the world.

Clemenceau was a great patriot. He, more than any one else in France, had occasion, in dealing with Alsace-Lorraine, to ignore the advice: "Y pensez toujours, n'en parlez jamais." His patriotism had none of the noisy provocation of Paul Déroulède. He never carried a wreath or a pennant of crape to the statue of Strasbourg. Although bitterness and hope were in his heart there was never a taunt upon his lips, until it became abundantly clear that Germany, afraid of the growing independence and strength of France in world affairs, was definitely arming, not for defence, but for attack.

Clemenceau lived through four blackmailing experiences at the hands of Germany. He had known 1870, 1875, the Schnaebele incident, and the direct menaces of Tangier, Casablanca, and Agadir. In them he rightly saw evidence that another upheaval was stirring beneath the thin crust of international relations. "Where the Gospels had failed," wrote Clemenceau, "the code which only advocates Right under the threat of repressing its violation, has only been able to exact more or less uncertain penalties. In the absence of a Code of Nations,

which can only work effectively by means of armed constraint, all that we can do—international law or not—is to take our own safeguards. This is the system under which we have lived since the first two sons of Adam had their difficulties."

Clemenceau would have despised himself had Alsace-Lorraine not been constantly in his thoughts, but he was never among the braying chorus of revanchards. He was no flag-waving chauvin; his feelings were too deep for any such expression. In spite of his philosophical disbelief in the existence of right, he nevertheless had a human, superstitious hope that wrong could not endure. But in the meantime he worked to protect his country against another onslaught of the traditional enemy.

In the early days of the Republic he fought against the dissipation, in far distant expeditions, of the slowly recovering strength of France. He deemed that all her resources of wealth and strength should be kept intact and available for her defence against Germany. He opposed any agreement between the democracy of the West and the despotism of Eastern Europe, and saw in Anglo-French understanding the most certain shield of his country against German aggression. Personal contacts with King Edward at Carlsbad had convinced him of the possibility, if not of a defensive naval-military alliance, at least of an understanding with Great Britain. In 1904, before he first entered office, the foundations of the entente cordiale had been laid.

In 1905 the German Emperor decided to test the strength of this new link, and by his theatrical landing at Tangier, where he denied the existence of any special

French interest in Morocco, brought Europe within an ace of war. M. Delcassé, as Foreign Minister, had been one of the artisans of the entente cordiale. He suffered from an incurable dread of letting his left hand know what his right hand was doing. He kept even his own colleagues completely in the dark as to international affairs, and ran his anti-German policy as though it were a business having no connection with the neighbouring departments of the army and the navy. Germany called for a conference for the discussion of Moroccan affairs, and let it be understood that a refusal would mean immediate war.

Delcassé was all in favour of resistance. He had against him the great business interests of the country, the majority of Parliament, and his Ministerial colleagues. Neither the army nor the navy was in a condition to face war. The former had not recovered from the sectarian legacies of the Dreyfus case and the warfare waged by the Radical War Minister, General André, against Catholic officers, while under another of Clemenceau's friends, Camille Pelletan, the discipline and material of the navy had sunk to a very low level.

While France might have counted upon British support in this crisis, her Russian ally was hopelessly entangled in her war with Japan. After a painful scene, France had to suffer the humiliation of Germany's forcing a French Minister to resign, and the conference Germany demanded was duly held at Algeciras. Germany hailed the summoning of this conference as a victory, but its results were far from pleasing her, for the entente emerged strengthened from the test, and steps were taken for the

British and French General Staffs to study a possible course of action in the event of a German attack upon France; and, during the same period, Germany began to substitute for her plan for a definite campaign in the west the project she afterwards so brilliantly put into execution, of an invasion of France through Belgium.

It was during Clemenceau's first term of office that Germany again tested the solidity of Anglo-French bonds. A few German deserters from the Foreign Legion were caught at Casablanca, and in their attempt to escape they were helped by the German Consul. Germany called for an apology and the release of the deserters. Clemenceau felt that this time a stop had to be put to German demands; that with the best will in the world it was impossible, without losing everything, to pocket another insult from Germany. He was quite willing to leave the matter to the Hague Tribunal. Germany accepted arbitration on the legal point but not on the facts in dispute. Clemenceau stood firm in his refusal to go to the Hague with part of his case thus prejudiced. Negotiations having come to a deadlock, Germany decided to rattle the sabre a little more loudly, and her Ambassador informed Clemenceau that, if the demands of his Government were not completely satisfied, he would, according to the Emperor's instructions, be forced to ask for his passports. Clemenceau bore the shock unshaken. He had long before made up his mind, and, despite the timid counsels which reached him from all parts, he was determined to go through to the end. Even for peace there were sacrifices which no country could be expected to pay, and among them was her

honour. To blackmail of such a kind a stop had to be put sooner or later, since each fresh concession would lead to heavier demands.

When an Ambassador indicates a desire to have his passport, he does so with becoming solemnity, and an equally grave reply is made. Never a great believer in conventions, Clemenceau, with the boyish, ironic look which his eyes never lost, flabbergasted the Ambassador by pulling out his watch and saying: "The Cologne express leaves at nine. It is only seven o'clock. Your Excellency will have to hurry, not to miss the train." Germany's bluff was called, and an agreement was reached. But Clemenceau knew that Germany would one day have a full hand, and that then there would be no bluffing. So, throughout his career, his voice of warning was heard. He refused to vote the cession of the eastern provinces. The cession aroused feelings which France could not repudiate or even dissimulate without abasing herself. In his early speeches he urged that on both sides of the Rhine people should work in peace for moral preeminence. As to France, she based her loyally pacific policy upon equitable reciprocity, and since France demanded respect for her treaty rights, she intended to give the example of fulfilling with equal loyalty her treaty obligations towards others.

Such was the tenor of Clemenceau's speeches while Prime Minister. Out of office his language remained courteous, but his criticism became more probing, and his concern as to Germany's intentions became increasingly clear.

When he was seventy years of age Germany despatched

the *Panther* to Agadir, with an intimation that she expected to be bought out. M. Caillaux was then Prime Minister, and for long the Chancelleries of the world, and particularly that of Great Britain, were puzzled by the course of the negotiations between Berlin and Paris. Clemenceau, who distrusted Caillaux's policy of reaching a Franco-German understanding with the help of finance, watched the progress of the negotiations with suspicion, which turned to certainty when M. de Selves, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and his colleague in the Senate, told him of a code message from the German Embassy, which, deciphered, had revealed the fact that the Prime Minister, unknown to his Cabinet colleagues and to the British Government, which had offered its support to France, was engaged in secret discussion of terms with Germany. Clemenceau advised M. de Selves to inform the President of the Republic and to resign, which advice he followed.

The Treaty of 4th November, 1911, which was signed by M. Poincaré as Caillaux's successor, naturally led to public intervention by Clemenceau in a speech of exceptional clarity, in which he asked whether the Treaty was an instrument of permanent peace. In that event he would forgo certain criticisms. His arguments were more vigorously driven home, and his doubts more detailed, than on previous occasions. The tenor of his speech was that it takes two to make a treaty.

"France wants to know if the other party to the treaty is determined to make of it a real instrument of peace. I have no hatred in my heart towards Germany. I want to have nothing to do with provocation. Germany is

above all an admirer of power, and her first thought is to use it. As the great economic development of the Empire is a constant temptation in this respect she wants the French to know that behind each German trader in Morocco stands an army of 5,000,000 men. She wants first of all to turn her glory and her strength to account. She secured her unity by blood and iron, and she means to use it to spread her surplus population throughout the world and to exact economic advantages from her neighbours. The history of the flux and reflux of invasion from the East along the Rhine has shown that the struggle for the mastery of the Rhine must cease, but for that the world needs a victor greater than his victory, a hero of moderation. Napoleon was not such a hero; neither is Germany. Five times since 1870 Germany has threatened war: in 1875, when Queen Victoria and Russia prevented her from finishing off the wounded of the battlefield of 1870; with the Schnaebele crisis, and those of Tangier, Casablanca, and Agadir. Such is the preface to the work of peace submitted to us today." Clemenceau concluded, "The trouble between Germany and us is, that domination must be the logical result of her victory, and that we do not believe that because we have been defeated we logically became vassals. The dead have given birth to the living, and they will remain faithful to the dead. What shall we say to our youth when it gazes on us with distrustful eyes because we hand on to it a smaller France than that which we ourselves received? Shall we tell it to deny or to forget its history, to abdicate, to bow to the inevitable destiny of peoples which have ceased to live? No, we still have

something else to say, something to do, something to desire."

Clemenceau made many mistakes. "More than most people," he smilingly admitted. In the hot muddle of democratic politics issues become blurred and values are no longer stable. While Germany, by vast increases in her military budget and her striking force, was building up the greatest war machine yet seen in history, Clemenceau, whose patriotism cannot be questioned, appeared to be much more concerned in defeating the bill for proportional representation, dear to the heart of his enemy, President Poincaré, and upsetting the Briand Ministry on that matter, than on what was happening on the other side of the Rhine. Yet he could affirm with more frankness than most Parliamentarians that he had never refused his support for a measure of national defence submitted as necessary by the Government of the day.

Democracy has no worse spectacle to offer to its public than that of its leaders trying to live up to the reputations as supermen which they have with all their art manufactured for themselves. However negligent or mistaken a politician may have been, he must never even appear for a second to doubt his own wisdom. He is denied the tolerance accorded to the Pope, and must at all times be infallible. When war's cataclysm reveals the emptiness of this boast, when it is made deafeningly known that some one has blundered, that while priests have been harried, Jews tried and retried; that while the freedom of man in all its aspects was being discussed with almost fratricidal passion, as it were in a vacuum, the mighty

leaders of the people were deaf to the warnings of diplomacy and the indications of history, then comes the ignoble part of history's film. Then the régime is on trial, and all the men who live on it feel the hot breath of aroused savagery rising around them. Then begins the shocking flight from responsibility. The army has been badly equipped! Impossible! Parliament has always voted the sums asked of it for national defence. No emphasis is laid upon the poignant fact that the Minister of War, in the general compromise of politics, has had to accept the drastic cuts made in the estimates by his Minister of Finance, who wants to keep expenditure down; nor on the objections made by the Minister of Labour to spending on the army money which he wants earmarked for social reform, nor on those of the Cabinet as a whole, which, like every Cabinet, knows that increased taxation does not make a good electioneering slogan.

Under M. Poincaré's rule, first as Prime Minister and afterwards as President of the Republic, a considerable effort had been made to furbish up the military shop-window of France. Efforts had been made to keep the army in the public eye by the weekly tattoo through the streets of the capital, and the new President appeared to be as eager as the German Emperor to be present at reviews, hospital openings, and other ceremonies at which the President could constitutionally attend. He had been elected to the Elysée with the support of clerical and reactionary votes and against M. Pams, the candidate of Republicans and the nominee of M. Clemenceau.

M. Poincaré was a stranger to the Republican struggles which had formed the Tiger's character. There was

nothing of the revolutionary about him: he typified the conservative intelligence of the upper bourgeoisie. He was a lawyer, and based his arguments on texts rather than upon instincts; reason, rather than the flame of conviction, was his motive power. He was in every way the antithesis to old Clemenceau, who pursued him with his enmity beyond the gates of the Elysée.

The Lorrainer shares with the Government the reputation of having no sense of humour. Poincaré, for his visits to the front, donned a motoring rig, with a specially-designed cap which gave him the solemnity of a discreet family retainer, and earned for him the derisive title of "notr' chauffeur national." All Clemenceau had in the shape of a front-line uniform was the disreputable hat which is now as much part of the trappings of history as that of Napoleon. This contrast is illuminating. Poincaré had a touch of personal vanity which Clemenceau loved to ridicule. He became known as Raymond I., and Clemenceau drew many a stinging picture of the President of the Republic (when he had managed to find one of those occasions in which Royalty, by patting the cheek of a sick child in hospital, so well displays its sympathy with the masses), climbing up to the top of the Colonne Vendôme to gaze upon "his good city" of Paris.

While fighting him on these lines in *L'Homme Libre*, his new paper, Clemenceau remained as restive as ever in Parliament. He forced Briand, the first Premier under the Poincaré presidency, to resign over electoral reform. The domestic policy of his successor, M. Barthou, inspired Clemenceau with not the slightest confidence; but all his talent as a journalist, all his authority in the

Senate, were devoted to supporting Barthou, a political opponent, in the unpopular task of forcing through the bill increasing French military service by a year, with which ineffective broom the Mrs. Partingtons hoped to sweep back the German Ocean.

There was one matter in which the President could entirely count upon his bitter critic. In all measures taken to reply to Germany's military expansion, Clemenceau gave full-hearted support to him and the Cabinet which executed his policy.

Clemenceau had voted for a reduction of military service to a term of two years, and confessed that nothing would please him more than to be able to return to the old militia defence as advocated by the Socialists. Unfortunately, however, the development of Germany's military power was such that, Radical though he was, he had to lend the whole of his weight to the Government's Three Years' Service Bill. Nevertheless, that did not prevent his declaring that the men usually in power were better in their place at prize distributions than they were when faced with the "terrible dilemma of Revolution or Death." His famous article entitled "Vouloir ou Mourir" was written in May 1913, after his first conversation with Poincaré since the Presidential election, and was without doubt the result of their patriotic alarm.

As the discussion of the bill went forward in Parliament, M. Caillaux and his supporters fighting it inch by inch, so grew the discontent of the country with the fresh sacrifice asked of it, particularly among the soldiers, who, like so many schoolboys, had been daily marking off the time which still separated them from liberation from the

colours, and who now saw themselves condemned to yet another year of barrack-yard drudgery. Clemenceau's article was a noble reply to the mutinies which broke out. After a briefly vigorous summary of anti-militarist propaganda, he talks straight to the mutineers: "You imagine that you are a thought: you're nothing but a vagrant weakness. While you are getting rid of your arms don't you hear the clamour of the guns on the other side of the Vosges? Take care. You will shed all the blood of your heart in tears without washing away your sin. Athens, Rome—the greatest things of the past were swept from the earth when the sentry failed in his duty, as you have begun to fail. And you, your France, your Paris, your village with its paths and its streams, all the tumult of history which gave you birth, since it is the work of your forefathers; does all this mean nothing to you? . . . If this is what you want, dare to say it, so that you may be accursed by those who made men of you, and be for ever dishonoured."

Clemenceau told them that their country needed all from them, and that one day, marching through the storm of steel, in one supreme moment they would see in a flash everything contained in that sweet word *country*, and they would be so proud of giving everything for their name that they would die happy.

After the passing of a considerably mutilated Three Years' Law, Clemenceau continued, and indeed strengthened, his criticisms, right up to the very eve of war. In the course of a debate in the Senate, which deeply moved all those who followed it, M. Charles Humbert, President of the Senate Commission of the Army, dis-

closed the terrible unpreparedness of the country for war with Germany. Her system of fortifications was out of date; there were not enough boots in store for the men, there were practically no shells for her guns. While her light field gun, the "75," was superior to the corresponding German guns, her heavy artillery could not stand comparison with that of Germany. M. Messimy, the Minister of War, acknowledged the substantial truth of these criticisms if they were looked upon as exceptions rather than the rule, but declared that he could not give an immediate reply to the Senator's speech. Clemenceau insisted upon his at once answering M. Humbert, stating: "The country has a right to know how its money has been spent. We must have an immediate reply. There are moments when all of us assume our responsibilities. Never since 1870 have I taken part in such disastrous proceedings as today. You must reply. It is necessary for the army, Parliament, and the country. Things cannot be allowed to slide. Today we must cry 'Halt!' The facts of M. Humbert—are they correct or not? The truth must be known."

Messimy replied on the following day, and showed that it was only after the Agadir warning in 1911 that any attempt had been made to supply the requirements of the army and place it on a footing approaching that of Germany. There was no telegraphic communication between the forts, some of which dated from 1878. No money had, up to three years before, been available for bridgehead material. Boots would be available in October. The Minister of Finance had repeatedly refused credits asked for by the Minister of War. By

persistent effort great improvement would be made by 1919, but even then she would not be on an equality with Germany. M. Messimy, having nothing else to dwell on, emphasised the moral strength of the French army, which was all-important, and with which, even with faulty guns, astonishing deeds could be performed. This led Clemenceau to suggest bitterly that it might then be simpler to arm the troops with arbalests.

In the course of the debate Clemenceau insisted upon the necessity for Parliamentary control of military expenditure; and the usual desire was shown to make the Higher Command and the great permanent officials of the War Office shoulder a responsibility which in reality weighed heavily upon every Government, and in particular upon the Radical Government, which Clemenceau himself had supported. Indeed, he was himself Prime Minister in three out of the five worst years of the ten prior to the war. During those ten years the credits asked for by the War Office for military equipment were cut down just under 50 per cent. by Parliament.

During the debate Clemenceau fastened with bitter joy upon the Minister's: "Please note the wonder-working qualities of moral force!" He pointed out that such a force could only arise from the confidence the troops had in the Higher Command, and asked what would become of that force when the army found itself flung into a struggle in which, owing to the mistakes of its leaders, it was doomed to destruction.

Under any other régime the Ministers, or the members of the Supreme Council of War, would have refused to accept responsibility for the country's defence when they

found themselves systematically deprived of the means of ensuring its preparedness. In Republican France any such action would have revived the old and still unhealed wounds of the Dreyfus case, and led in the long run to the complete disruption of the Higher Command of the Army, which, however pig-headed it may appear to a supple politician, nevertheless forms one of the few remaining bodies of men who, with a sense of duty wider than that of loyalty to a party or a régime, accept both the greatness and the servitude of military life for the sake of their country.

The whole French Republic suffered from the optimism which enables the actor in the midst of the welter of a rehearsal to say to himself: "It'll be all right on the night." Clemenceau, with his revolutionary training, was as optimistic as his amazing forefathers, who, in order to install the reign of Freedom and Fraternity by Equality, shortened every aristocrat by a head. As a great Parliamentary tactician he could not see the wood for the trees. Anti-clerical legislation, electoral reform, and the excitement of producing a Ministerial crisis every few months distracted his attention from his deep conviction that, sooner or later, France would have to fight Germany. When he criticised the Government and the War Office for their shortcomings, he was in reality criticising his own terrible errors. It needed the German *Panther* at Agadir to rouse the French Tiger; and from 1911 onwards, although still vastly interested in making the domestic political wheels go round, he concentrated most of his efforts in Parliament and in the Press to warning his countrymen of the danger which lay in wait for them.

XVII. WAR CRITICISM

At the outset of war Clemenceau's gloomiest previsions were amply justified. It was 1870 over again. Science, method, and preparation won the day over ignorance, muddle, and improvisation. Out-numbered by fighters, out-ranged by artillery, overwhelmed by weight of shell, the French army was driven with astounding rapidity right up to the gates of Paris. The imminence of the city's capture drove the Government to the provinces. The Government appealed to Parliamentarians to support them in their temporary exile. Clemenceau transported himself and his *Homme Libre* to the temporary capital at Bordeaux.

He was then seventy-three years old. He had made his début on the stage of national politics in the tragedy performed in the theatre of that very town, when the National Assembly accepted Germany's victory in 1871. Yet this apparent repetition of history, this deep sounding of the Fate motif, aroused nothing but optimism in his eternally resisting heart. He rejoiced in comparing the internal feuds of 1871 with the Union Sacrée which has made all Frenchmen brothers and helpers of the Government in fighting for victory.

His satisfaction was short-lived. Clemenceau could

not for long remain a sugary eulogist of a Government which, despite the miracle of the Marne, was completely swamped by problems of war administration. In no field of the work was this more apparent than in the army medical services, the equipment of which was hopelessly inadequate and out of date. Wounded men were crowded into trains which had carried horses to the front, and made what beds they could upon the horses' straw, and reached the hospitals in a pitiable condition of putrefaction. Opium, anaesthetics of every kind, bandages, towels, sheets, and beds were at a premium. The patriotic efforts of Frenchwomen could not create overnight a supply of nurses. Tetanus, and every other form of wound infection, was the inevitable product of the appalling conditions under which surgeons and nurses had to work, even in big cities far from the front.

Clemenceau began to criticise again. His criticism was well-informed and to the point, for his daughter, Madame Jacquemaire Clemenceau, was nursing in a hospital installed in the big public school of Bordeaux. M. Clemenceau was censored, but returned again and again to the charge, only to have his leading articles ruthlessly suppressed by some anonymous bureaucrat. If M. Clemenceau was ferocious and impulsive, M. Millerand, the Minister of War, was obstinate and persistent. Finally, publication of *L'Homme Libre* was suspended completely for four days. Clemenceau with ironic humour appeared next morning as "L'Homme Enchaîné," and resumed his rôle as journalistic critic of the Government with such vigour as the censorship allowed him. Direct political action was denied him, since Parliament was in recess.

A half-hearted attempt to bring about the assembly of Parliament in Bordeaux, which was encouraged by Clemenceau's Radical friends, collapsed when it became apparent that the only premises available for such a meeting were in a cheap music-hall which was still placarded with the title of the peace-time production, "Keep that Smile."

Clemenceau's criticism concentrated upon the inefficiency of the Ministry of War, which, so long as the Government remained at Bordeaux, had at least the excuse of the muddle wrought by long-distance control over an ever-changing situation.

When Parliament and Government returned to the capital matters were slow to improve. Clemenceau, as member and President of the fighting Committees of the Senate, was a strong advocate for Parliamentary control, and an unsparing critic of the muddles which attended the industrial mobilisation of France, of the Salonika expedition, of Allied diplomacy, of the Hidden Hand; indeed of practically everybody and everything save of the man in the field, for whose courage he had a heart-felt admiration, and with whose sufferings he had unbounded sympathy. War in the field was a great devourer of men, and in politics too all the old systems of Government, the flimsy pretenses of political machinery, collapsed under the strain, and the men accustomed to direct them found themselves hurled hither and thither by the storms of war.

The dominant party in the Chamber, the Radical Socialists, failed utterly to ride the whirlwind. Viviani was succeeded by Briand, who gave way to Ribot. With

each successive Ministry the number of possible governmental combinations prepared to recognise the claims of the old Parliamentary clientèle grew more and more restricted, and the prospects of France's pulling through to victory became even more remote.

The Republic in France was by no means an ideal instrument of defence for the country at war. Parliament was as bitterly jealous of its rights of control over the army as it was of its right to criticise the Government. It was as eager to assume responsibility, with the prospect of victory still ahead of it, as it was fearful of the wrath of a people in defeat. The system stopped short of the incoherencies of Soviet rule, but Parliament went far in an endeavour to run the war by political committees. A compact set of men, freed from any concern save that of victory, and disciplined in their efforts, is an infinitely more efficient instrument of war-leading than can be obtained by Parliamentary interference, not only in questions of supply, effectives, and general material, but even in the organisation and personnel of the Higher Command.

The party truce proclaimed at the outbreak of war was outwardly maintained in the form of successive coalition Governments, but in 1917 the Socialists and the Caillautist Radicals were already in opposition, and the hopes of the country, alarmed by rumours of treason in high places, were turning in increasing measure towards Clemenceau as the man who, by his courageous use of authority, could alone give civilian and soldier alike the feeling that they had at last a real Government in France.

By the summer of 1917 the country had become

thoroughly alarmed by the progress of "defeatism," not only in the interior, but even among the troops at the front. The mutinies in the French army had awakened every patriot to the danger of continuing the policy of letting matters slide. Even the least extravagant began to feel that there might be something behind the apparently fantastic charges of corruption and treason, daily made by the Royalist, Léon Daudet, against Ministers such as Malvy, and great politicians such as Caillaux, as well as against swarms of small fry behind the scenes of journalism and politics. In July Clemenceau bluntly attacked M. Malvy, Minister of the Interior, for the slackness of his administration in dealing with enemy propaganda, and brought about the disappearance of M. Ribot's Government. M. Painlevé, his successor, only managed to stave off for a few more weeks the advent of the Tiger to power, which had been so dreaded by most politicians.

At the age of seventy-six on 16th November, 1917, he became, for the second time, Prime Minister of his country.

Fate pursued Clemenceau with her irony in making of him the instrument of French salvation, for, in the achievement of that salvation, all those fine ideals of social progress, those dreams of regeneration and justice and freedom, which formed the bearable human part of his philosophy, had to be sacrificed to his blood-red vision of life as a series of brief periods of illusion rent by the stark horrors of cataclysmic killings. In office he had to suppress the propagation of gospels he had himself preached; to deliver to justice—and to that military

justice against which he had himself so ardently struggled —men who had fought side by side with him for his Radical ideas.

He came into power as a Dictator in the teeth of the avowed hostility of the Socialists and all the Caillaux Radicals. He was supported mainly by the Right and the Clericals, against whom he had battled for over twenty years, and whose support he had frequently declared in the past to be impossible of acceptance by any true Republican.

In the army his advent to power aroused a curious mixture of hopes and fears. This dictatorial, short, incisive-tempered old man was known to have very definite ideas as to the fallibility even of Generals commanding in the field. He was known also to have a very precise idea that, as in the long run responsibility for failure in the field would be fastened upon men in office, so the decisive word in all matters of primal importance must be uttered by the Government.

His relations with the President of the Republic, M. Poincaré, at one time extremely bitter, were still far from being those of complete trust and affection.

He took office, moreover, at a time when Allied prospects were far from rosy. Russia's collapse was complete. Italy was struggling under the defeat of Caporetto. Germany was still hurling her human breakers on the rocks of Verdun, and American aid was far distant. As he remarked the day before his Ministry was formed: the country was no longer willing to be stuffed up with trashy versions of the truth, the object of which was to make it believe in the infallibility of men who had

led it from one mess to another. It wanted openness and frankness in dealing with all the difficulties at the front and in the rear.

He lost no time in showing the world that it was in this spirit that he intended to act. In presenting to Parliament his new Government, of which he was the only man of outstanding merit, he took as his motto: "The war, and nothing but the war!" and in moving passages appealed to the country to stand fast with the soldier, to live, suffer, and fight with him; to let every zone, however distant from the front, become a spiritual army zone.

"Never has France more clearly felt the necessity of living and growing in the ideal of strength controlled by human conscience, in the determination to establish more justice between citizens and between peoples capable of liberating themselves. To conquer in order to be just has been the motto of all our Governments since the beginning of the war. This frank and open programme we shall maintain. We have great soldiers with a great history, under leaders tested, tried, and inspired to those acts of supreme devotion which made the noble renown of their ancestors. Through them, through us all, the immortal patrie of humanity, overcoming mere pride of victory, will, in its noble ambitions of peace, follow the course of its destinies.

"Those Frenchmen whom we were obliged to throw into the fight have claims upon us. They demand that none of our thoughts be turned aside from them, none of our acts be foreign to them. We owe them unreservedly everything. Everything for France, bleeding in her

glory; everything for the apotheosis of triumphant right. We have one sole, simple duty—to stand fast with the soldier, to live, suffer, and fight with him, to cast from us everything that is not for our country. The hour has come for us to be solely French, and to say to ourselves with pride that that is sufficient. The rights of the front and the duties of the rear—let everything else be merged. Let every zone be the army zone. If there must be men to open up again in their hearts sources of bygone hate, let us brush them aside.

"All civilised nations are engaged in the same battle against modern forms of ancient barbarisms. With all our good Allies we form the solid rock of a barrier which shall not be crossed. On the Allied front, at all hours and everywhere, there is nothing but fraternal solidarity; the surest foundation of the world to be.

"Our France, the tilting-ground of ideals, has suffered for everything that is man's. Firm in hopes drawn from the springs of purest humanity, she chooses to suffer still in defence of the soil of her great ancestors with the hope of opening ever wider, to men and to peoples, all the gates of life. Therein lies the force of the French soul.

"That is the force which impels our people to labour and to war. Those silent soldiers of the factory deaf to evil suggestions, those old peasants bending over their soil, those robust women who work, those children who gravely give them aid out of their weakness—these also are our Poilus, who, in after times, reflecting on the great task, will be able to say, with those of the trenches, 'I was there, too.' With these we also must live, and

so act, putting aside our sorrows, that afterwards we shall be able to say that we loved one another. But it is not sufficient to say that we love one another; we have to prove it to ourselves. We wish to try to give this proof. Could there be a finer programme for a Government? There have been mistakes. Let us think no more about them, save in order to repair them. . . ."

The eloquence of this appeal went a long way to rally behind him the wavering Radicals, and it moved even the Socialists, by then in full cry for peace, to constant applause.

Perhaps Clemenceau was even more effective in replying to criticisms the next day. In improvisation his mind flashed in and out with lightning thrust, and what his words and delivery lost in academic grandeur was more than gained by the direct humanity of his clear-sighted realisation of all the difficulties that lay ahead of them, and of his own unworthiness to meet the crushing needs of the crisis:

"You do not expect me to talk of personal questions. I am not here for that. Still, I have heard enough to understand that the criticisms made of me should inspire me with proper modesty. I am contrite for the mistakes I have made and for those which I am likely to make. I do not think I can be accused of having sought power. I have not courted power or influence. I have never been met in the ante-chambers, nor even at the Chamber. I never came there, because I did not want to be accused of intriguing. I am in power. I hope it will not be a misfortune for my country. You tell me I have made mistakes. Perhaps you do not know the worst of them.

I am here because there are terrible moments when those who, through all stress, find in their hearts the love of their country, the greatness of which they did not before suspect, see the hopes of the country fixed on them. I am here through the pressure of public opinion, and I am almost afraid of what it will ask of me, of what it expects of me.

"I have been asked to explain myself in regard to war aims and to the idea of a society of nations. I have replied in my declaration, 'We must conquer for the sake of justice.' That is clear. We live in a time when words have great power, but they have not the liberating power. The word justice is as old as mankind. Do you imagine that the formula of a society of nations is going to solve everything?

"There is at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs a committee preparing a scheme for a society of nations. Among its members are the most authoritative masters of international law. I undertake that immediately their labours are finished, I will deposit the result on the table of the Chamber, if I am still Prime Minister—which does not seem likely. [Laughter and cheers.]

"I am not unfavourable to arbitration. It was I who sent M. Léon Bourgeois to the Hague, where was made a series of laws which Germany is now in course of violating. Many believe that a miracle will bring about a society of nations. I do not believe that a society of nations will be one of the results of this war. If tomorrow you propose to me that Germany should be included in a society of nations, I should not consent. What guarantees do you offer me? Germany's signa-

ture? Go and ask the Belgians what they think of that!"

Still talking direct to the Socialist benches, M. Clemenceau continued:

"You never tire of saying that the first thing that must be done is that Germany herself shall destroy German militarism, but she is not destroying it; she is keeping it.

"M. Forgeot wants to make war, but while we are making war he wants us to speak of peace. Personally, I believe that when you are in the middle of action you should talk as little as possible. Do M. Forgeot's ideas come within the range of practical politics? Do people believe that the men in the trenches and the women in the factories do not think of peace? Our thoughts are theirs. It is to obtain some dignity in life that they are fighting. When you ask me my war aims, I reply that my war aim is to conquer." [Loud cheers and Socialist interruption.]

Again, meeting Socialist interruptions, M. Clemenceau said:

"I understand your preoccupations, some of which I share, but we must not misunderstand war. All these people want peace. But if, while they are fighting, the rumour is put about that delegates of this or of that belligerent country are discussing peace conditions—that yesterday the eve of peace had been reached, that next day there was withdrawal—then we are going to be condemned to flounder about in mud and in blood for years still. And that is the way to disarm and demoralise peoples. For these reasons I am not in favour of conferences where citizens of different countries at war will speak of peace. I want to make war. This means that

for the moment we must still all party discussions. Is there a man who has been more a party man than myself? I see today that I have been far too much of a party man. My programme is a military and economic programme. We have Allies, towards whom we have a duty of loyalty and fidelity which must override every other consideration. M. Forgeot has said: 'We are glad to have them; they are also glad to have us.' There is our guarantee."

M. Clemenceau then answered the far-fetched fears of the Socialists that France might be tempted by the lust of conquest to go beyond justice in her peace claims.

"Do you believe that America, after shedding the blood of her children on the battlefield, would allow us to commit any international crime? It is impossible. We have not yet reached victory. We have reached a cruel moment of the war. A time of privations is at hand, a time at which our spirit must become greater. Do not, in the state of mind in which we shall be, speak of peace. We all want peace, we are making sacrifices to get it, and we must get rid of old passions and turn towards the enemy. Let us leave all questions aside. . . .

"Such is our programme. Justice is our weapon against treason, for men always have a feeling of satisfaction when a criminal is punished, and where treason is concerned I admit of no possible pardon. In any case, I desire to say that you have a Government which intends to try to govern, in the strict, but noble, idealistic sense of the word. Where I disagree with you, Gentlemen of the Extreme Left, is when you wish to introduce abstract ideas into the domain of realities, for that is impossible.

We shall try to govern honestly, and in a Republican spirit. You are not obliged to think we shall succeed. But we will do our best. If we make mistakes, others have done that before us, others will do it after us. And if at last we see glowing before us the long-awaited dawn of the day when we can greet victory, I hope, if it is only to complete the beauty of the picture, that you will pass a vote of censure upon me, and I shall go away happy. I know you will not do that; but allow me to point out that you have almost given me that vote of censure before listening to my Ministerial programme. I challenge you in any case to say that we have made any attempt to deceive you. If we hear painful news our hearts will bleed, but we will give that news to you here. We have never given anybody the right to suppose that we are a peril to any class of citizen or a danger to the national defence. If you believe that to be the case, come and prove it, and I will leave the House. But if you believe that what we want above all is the welfare of France, give us your confidence, and we will try to deserve it."

During the war it was commonly lamented that while this great world-crisis had always thrown up men capable of riding the whirlwind, neither on the Allied nor on the enemy side had any such dominating figure been cast up by the storm. The rectitude of an Asquith, the adroit subtlety of a Briand, had failed in statesmanship, just as the sleepy optimism of a Joffre, the prudence of a Pétain, the mechanical mastery of a Hindenburg, had sought in vain for a military solution. Then came Clemenceau the critic, the Jacobin, the revolutionary,

crabbed with old age, constantly baffled and bewildered by life's problems, feared and hated in the rear by the politicians with whom he had to work, intellectually at war with all that represented first principles to the leaders at the front, cumbered up and entangled by peace-time professions of political idealism—an old man with all his past to forget, and looking forward to no future in this world or the next.

He swallowed everything in one gulp; he who all his life had fought for freedom against the power of State was the first to show with what tyrannical success could be wielded in courageous hands all the weapons of war-time repression. He who had called upon the world to share the shame of the enslavement of his thought by censorship was no less backward than his predecessor in concealing all unpalatable truth but his own. He who had made his name in the struggle against the rough and ready injustice of martial law applied it like a hot iron to what he thought needed the salutary processes of cauterisation. Like the great revolutionaries before his time, he preached fraternity and paraded firing-parties. Everything was sacrificed with grim tranquillity to war's commanding claims, and he was a man meeting fate alone. His Ministry was composed of nonentities. His majority in Parliament was a creation of fear. He himself was the Prime Minister of a people's panic—the last barrier against disastrous defeat. Great things were expected of him, and he had the wide-eyed courage to know what failure would mean, not only to himself, but to the whole course of history.

Speed and decision in action were needed for the war-

wearied, war-shattered, doubting people. No time was lost in displaying both qualities; in giving the soldier at the front and his family behind the lines a feeling that at last they would be protected, not only against the subtle propaganda of defeat, but against their own weaknesses.

Thanks to his pressure as a critic the first tumbrils of treason and tragedy were already being filled. Within six weeks of his assuming power permission had been obtained from Parliament for the prosecution of ex-Premier Caillaux; the Bolo trial was over; and the wheels of Justice were running free from the brakes of politics. A window had been opened.

XVIII. IN COMMAND

THROUGH that open window came the cold, invigorating wind of reality, dispelling the evil gases of doubt and timidity which were fast reducing the people to fatalist stupour and acceptance of defeat. Fresh air was the first necessity, and the new Government's immediate task was to clean out cesspools of defeatism. It was a task not lightly to be undertaken, for the consequences of a mistake might well have been irremediable. Clemenceau was thoroughly aware of what was expected of him. The time had gone past when, with a show of authority and the production of one or two scapegoats, public anxiety would have been satisfied that the work of treason had been scotched. He knew that nothing but radical surgical operation would justify the hopes placed in him by the nation, and he knew, moreover, that by nothing but such drastic intervention could his patient France be saved from general gangrene. Only by the courage of his acts in dealing with this problem could he hope for a continuance of public support, and success in suppressing the defeatist campaign was essential if the armies of the Republic were to have a chance of resisting to a victorious end.

Defeatism was therefore the first and the ugliest nettle

to be seized. Clemenceau grasped it, with a firmness and with a disregard for his own personal safety and future, which augured well for the execution of the rest of his programme. His first speech as War Prime Minister to the Chamber of Deputies did more to hearten the country than half a dozen bulletins of victory. His attitude at the outset of the treason trials did but strengthen this impression.

When M. Poincaré, as President of the Republic, took the step, which honoured him, of calling upon Clemenceau, his bitterest political enemy, to form a Ministry, Clemenceau accepted office on the common understanding that Caillaux would be called upon at once to render account to justice of those questionable policies and acts which had fostered the hope of premature peace and deeply disturbed the war spirit of France and of her Allies.

On 11th December, 1917, after less than a month in office, the Government asked Parliament for authority to prosecute M. Caillaux for endangering the safety of the State, and the Parliamentary Committee appointed to deal with this demand was soon able to judge the unshakable resolve of Clemenceau to give justice a free rein, checked by no considerations of persons or of parties in dealing with the case.

Those Committee proceedings have the very flavour of fear about them. In the faltering thoughts and half-expressed doubts displayed it is easy to visualise the reticent agonies of the tribunals of the Revolution, to see with what cold terror the effects of a mistaken vote, the chances and changes of fortune, had to be weighed up

by men whose heads shook so uncertainly upon their necks.

Parliament is forced to be jealous of its prerogatives; it runs too many risks not to buttress itself around with the defences of custom and privilege. It is also forced, even more than a trade union or a profession, to see in an attack upon one of its number an onslaught upon its whole existence, and this self-protection, necessary to some extent in a country with stabilised Parliamentary forms and practice, becomes essential in one with a Parliamentary Government as fluid and revolutionary in its brief traditions as is that of France.

Brushing aside all legal quibbles as to the nature and the value of the evidence upon which Caillaux was to be tried, Clemenceau bluntly told the Committee that the Government did not pretend to be able to prove Caillaux's guilt towards it. All it had to show was that a *prima facie* case existed and called for investigation. They could not for the moment differentiate between Caillaux and the other Bolo scandals. They produced evidence, it was true, but, quite apart from that, the mere fact that Caillaux was implicated in the Bolo business, that one of his people had died in jail, and that two others were now under arrest on charges of treason, should suffice. "In the ordinary course of events," Clemenceau reminded the Committee, "any ordinary private citizen in such circumstances would have been very quickly called upon to explain his actions to justice. That is all we want to do."

More than one member, voicing the apprehensions of most Parliamentarians, besought Clemenceau to think

well upon the danger of the action he contemplated. "We are," they said, "at war. Think of the anguish of our position and of the responsibility you ask us to take. Are we going to hale before the Courts every one who does not think as we do? The mob is with you, and is athirst for blood. It demands Caillaux's head. Beware! it will ask for others. You ask us to embark lightly upon Jacobinism. More heads will fall if we give you Caillaux's. You may not be in power tomorrow, and the mob may ask for your head too."

Clemenceau: "I am ready. I'll go."

A member: "You are starting on a very bad road. We'll see what will happen in the future."

Clemenceau: "Alas! my age may prevent that. But you have spoken of responsibilities. That word does not frighten me. I am here to assume them, and if the law did not make it my duty to make you share them, I would take them all on my shoulders. Think of my position. Every day for three years I have criticised the war-leading of every Government. I criticised the atmosphere created among our people by hiding part of the truth from them. I have even criticised the conduct of military operations. You will admit that I never asked M. Poincaré for office. The day when he summoned me I would have been dishonoured had I refused to accept power. You tell me that the people are with me."

A member: "You can be sure of that, and I deplore it."

Clemenceau: "That's not what actuates me. In fact, it frightens me. For three years nobody has shouldered his responsibilities. I am going to do so now. Do you

think it good that the Poilu, who only knows things vaguely, but feels them, nevertheless, should think that while he is fighting there are people in the rear who are betraying him? Everything but that! Men I do not know have come to me from the trenches to say things so violent that I cannot repeat them here. They must be given the certainty that while they are fighting at the front they are protected in the rear. That protection cannot be given by speeches, but by acts, and the first act of all, since justice and law exist, is to apply them to all citizens even if they be senators or deputies. That's the principle to which I stick."

Clemenceau, having only succeeded in still further alarming the Committee by the vigour of his language, at its next sitting put matters even more crudely, declaring: "The Poilus are saying, 'There's not so much fuss about sending us to the stake!' In the street, among the troops, from their leaders to the lowest rung in the army, they are saying, 'While those civilians are quibbling about procedure, we are being killed!' What also are their womenkind saying? That 'the politicians want to protect each other.' We cannot allow that to be said under a Republic."

Timidity, still hoping to frighten Clemenceau with the spectre of a Reign of Terror, asked him to picture what would happen if, by throwing Caillaux to the mob appetite, he created a precedent, and warned him that he would be forced to keep his tumbrils full to provide fresh victims for a bloodthirsty people. "Tomorrow," he was told, "you will have to fling them Briand; you yourself may have to go."

Clemenceau: "Well, here I am. That does not frighten me."

Few men have made so many enemies as Clemenceau in the course of public life. He has been accused of nearly every crime in the calendar. He has been howled at as a traitor, spurned as a bribe-taker, accused of having sacrificed his country for the satisfaction of his greedy, arrogant ambition, of personal disloyalty, of cruelty. He is the first to admit that he made mistakes and committed the crimes of most human beings, but even his enemies can hardly believe that he wantonly ran the risks he incurred when he pressed forward with his Governmental programme. The reluctance of the Committee to give him what practically amounted to a blank cheque may have been in the first place due to dread of the future, but, however natural it may have been, it was unavailing.

Joseph Caillaux spent his first night in jail on 14th January, 1918, and such was Clemenceau's driving-power in carrying out the first part of his programme—that of showing the man in the trenches that his task was guarded against the dagger of treachery—that, when Bolo, whose case had been dragging on for months, came up for trial on 4th February, there were a score of persons already charged with intercourse with the enemy, including, in addition to Caillaux and the Bolo gang, M. Malvy, who had been Minister of the Interior from 1914 to 1917; M. Charles Humbert, proprietor of *Le Journal* and ex-President of the Senate Committee of the Army, and a few minor deputies.

Clemenceau adopted the attitude towards all these

trials that, once justice had them in hand, he had no further action to take. He appointed a special Under Secretary of State, M. Ignace, to deal with such matters. The story of those trials has been told elsewhere.[1] Once having given the impetus to the new tendency, Clemenceau was able to tackle the rest of his problems with a mind relieved of all fear of further mutinies in the army, such as nearly brought France to disaster in the spring and early summer which preceded his advent to power.

Perhaps the secret of Clemenceau's war leadership was that he trusted the people of France to uphold the efforts of any Government which by its actions showed itself determined to win the war, and which would boldly realise that, without the help of every citizen, success was uncertain.

The first few months of his Governmental activity were by no means confined to bringing traitors to account. Making a reality of his intention that the whole of France should feel itself to be part of the front area, measure after measure was passed, the necessity of which had been long before recognised, but which no Government up to then felt itself strong enough to envisage. Thus Painlevé, just before Clemenceau succeeded him, had felt bound to hold out hopes of release from the colours of the older conscripts. Clemenceau without a tremor, after two months in office, announced that, far from this being possible, he would immediately prepare the youngest recruits for active service, would not only hold all men serving, but would call back two older contingents of conscripts for a period of two months. He stated that there were 1,200,000 mobilised men at

[1] *Treason and Tragedy.* By George Adam. (Jonathan Cape.)

work in the rear whom it might be necessary to call upon for service in the field, and instituted a rigorous comb-out of the younger men mobilised in war factories. The civilian rationing system was strengthened. Socialists who wanted to go to Russia with a view to promoting a separate peace were refused their passports; confectioners and pastry shops were closed down; fresh heavy taxation was introduced.

The last accusation that could be made against Clemenceau was that he courted popularity. Yet he won it, and kept it, throughout all the trials and the touch-and-go chances of disaster which marked his term of power, during which, by methods other than his own, Paris was made to feel herself part of the front area; when Bertha knocked on her door, the invaders swept down again to the Marne, and the capital prepared once more for her immediate defence.

There is no more extraordinary illustration of the diversity of popularity than that furnished by the worship of Clemenceau. He made not the slightest effort to court the mob. He never appeared in public. His visits to the front seldom received more than a mention in an official note to the Press. His voice was only raised in Parliament, and dealt without rhetoric with the business in hand. In his personal contacts he was more often than not testy, sometimes cruel, and occasionally abrupt almost to the point of rudeness. Yet the rare photographs of him in his priestly skull-cap at the Ministry of War or at the front were treasured like ikons in countless French families. The disreputable hat he wore at the front, which made him look like a

poacher, became as famous as the hat of the "Little Corporal." He quarrelled with more than one of his Generals; in oft-repeated japes insulted even his own Ministers; was as lavish as he was resentful of criticism; and became the idol of the same country that had been driven nearly into frenzies of hero-worship by the theatrical posturings of blazing military vanity on a black horse in the shape of Boulanger.

It does not at all belittle Clemenceau's achievement to point out that, once "defeatism" had been uprooted, the factors of ultimate success were on his side. He alone in France could have so quickly restored the patriotic tone of the country, and with him alone perhaps was it possible for unity of command to be instituted.

The Allies, with their own problems of security to think of, responsible to their own Parliaments for the success with which their national forces were being employed, naturally declined to accept supreme French command when they saw that instability of French Ministerial life had its immediate repercussion on the supreme command in the field.

Clemenceau was the first French Premier who, if only by reason of being the last hope of his country, gave such a sufficient promise of stability and frank, clean war-leading as to render possible acceptance of unified command. No one man can with justification claim to have brought it about, but undoubtedly the personality of Clemenceau, together with British and American confidence in Foch, made it feasible.

Clemenceau's relations with Foch, as with the rest of the chief army commanders of France, were tainted at

their source by prejudice on both sides. The Dreyfus case, which had in so many ways ruined State police machinery of precisely the kind required to prevent the growth of treason, had also left in Republican minds the feeling, not altogether unjustifiable, that the General Staff was a body subject to Clerical, and therefore to reactionary, influence, and that the higher posts of the army were filled by men whose fervour as Catholics, while it would never diminish their patriotism, might cool their ardour for the Republic.

Relations between Clemenceau and most of his Generals were those of cordial mistrust. It is only natural that the soldier in the field should accept with but bad grace the criticism and control of political organisations, which, however ignorant they may be of the high mysteries of military science, are, nevertheless, entitled, since upon their shoulders falls the ultimate responsibility, to have their say in the planning and conduct of military operations. Clemenceau was, while in opposition, an ardent advocate of Parliamentary control based upon the best traditions of the Revolution, with its political Commissaires aux Armées who exercised the right to poke their noses into all sorts of problems which the soldier has from time immemorial regarded as being peculiarly his own pet and holy mysteries. The desire of the army to be master of its own fate, to be freed from the meddling intrigues of politicians, was as natural as it was intense. The failure of the Nivelle offensive (1917) showed how damaging such interference could be to the morale, not only of the Higher Command, but of the troops themselves.

Yet when Clemenceau came into power there was a noticeable falling off in his enthusiasm for the activity of civilian politicians in the army zone, and he never failed to support generals overwhelmed by unmerited setbacks or disasters from the angry clamour of the Chamber.

Clemenceau had warned the country when he first took office that there were hard times ahead of it. The events of the spring and summer showed that he was a true prophet. The British had been forced back to Amiens, and the French were again fighting a defensive battle while withdrawing to the old front of the Ourcq and the Marne. By the middle of June a new Military Governor of Paris had been appointed, and a Committee was at work preparing, not so much for the evacuation of the capital, as for its defence street by street. Clemenceau would have indeed been guilty of the grossest carelessness had he neglected such preparations, but they by no means reflected his confidence in the outcome of the struggle, which, almost by tacit agreement, was regarded by all belligerents as certain to be decisive.

The summer months were marked by increasing stringency in dealing with every manifestation of defeatism. Arrests continued to be made on a wholesale scale. Clemenceau broke definitely with his opponents on the Radical and Socialist Left by refusing to allow them to talk of peace while war was still in progress. He declined to take any action against the leaders in the field for their failure to stem the German onrush at the beginning of June, for which a section of Parliamentary opinion held Foch to be personally responsible. He informed the Chamber that a rapid inquiry had been

instituted into certain incidents at the front, but that he would regard it as cowardly if he were to strike at men who had deserved well of their country, and whose responsibilities and actions could not, at the moment, be established with certainty. The cruel ordeal which he had predicted for the country had come. "The whole question is," he said, "are we stout-hearted enough to go through with it?" Russia's collapse had enabled Germany to deliver the full weight of her sledge-hammer blow upon the Franco-British front, and under it both armies had given way.

The Premier's tribute to the armies brought the whole House, with the exception of the Socialists, to its feet, but when Clemenceau doggedly extended that tribute by saying: "Our great soldiers have great leaders," he was interrupted by a storm of protests from the pacifist Left. He repeated the sentence time after time with the same result, and added that he would, if necessary, stay there for ever at the tribune, because he considered it his duty to tell them the truth. Before he was finally forced to end his speech, he declared that he would not capitulate to the Germans so long as he had the confidence of the Chamber and the country.

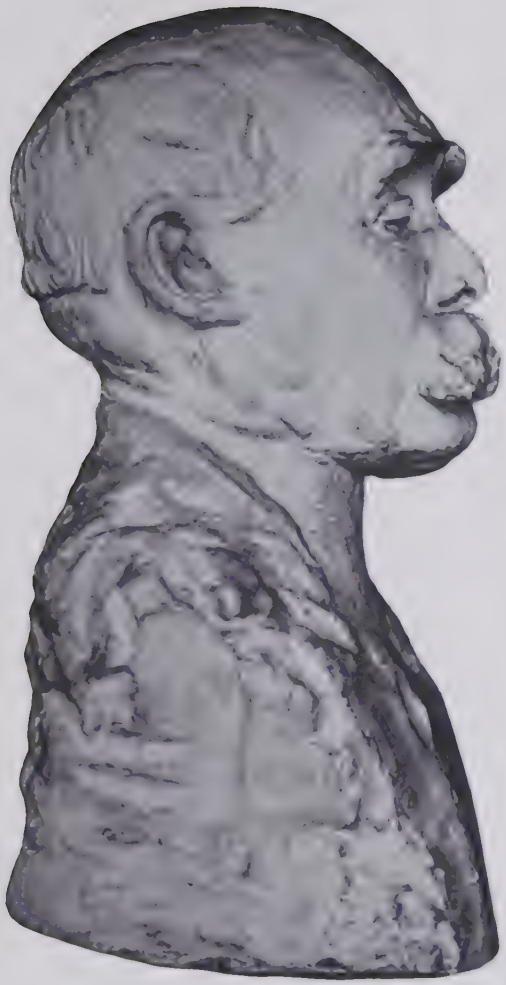
Events in the field very rapidly justified his attitude, and by the middle of July, when the appeal of Duval, the traitor of the Bonnet Rouge, against his death-sentence was dismissed, when the trial of Malvy, ex-Minister of the Interior, began, the country had recovered its tone, and was able to meet the opening blows of the third phase of Germany's last convulsive effort to batter through to Paris.

At midnight on 14th July, the distant, heavy sound of three explosions brought expectant Paris to its windows, where it listened to the constant roll of drum-fire. Crowds gathered on the heights of Montmartre and the Buttes de Chaumont, saw the whole of the sky towards the north-east flaming with rapid gun-fire, which lasted until four o'clock in the morning, when the great adventure was launched. By 27th July Germany had again been forced to relinquish her hold upon the Marne, and the story of 1914 was repeated, with the difference that the Allies were able to follow through their success by every material means of transport, munitions and men, and that on the German side there was nothing left behind the front but the road to retreat and the mentality of disaster.

Germany was able to bombard Paris with her farewell Bertha shells, but at the front she was only able to make a show of resistance. General Foch and Clemenceau between them had finally precipitated the crisis in German man-power, as well as in supply of material which American intervention in the war had made inevitable.

Clemenceau's own personal activity during that period was naturally overshadowed by the efforts of the army; but there was hardly a week which did not see him at some point on the front, entering into democratically friendly talk with the Poilus, or seeking, with occasionally savage paternal authority, to maintain harmony and confidence among his generals.

By the autumn generals in the field were concerned more with the clearing up of the mess caused by four



Bulloz

RODIN'S BUST OF CLEMENCEAU

years' war, by the re-occupation of Départements which had been in the hands of the invader, and by solidifying their communications than with actual strategic operations. In the same way the minds of Governments were concerned, almost exclusively, with problems of imminent peace. Notes were flying from one European capital to another, and hither and thither across the Atlantic. Vague aspirations, loosely phrased, were obtaining acceptance as the foundations of a future peace, without the peoples concerned being given any opportunity either of expressing their own opinions or of hearing those of others on the matter.

The whole structure of the Versailles Treaty was perhaps weakest by reason of the fact that its foundations were enunciated by an American professor, who, in the name of the self-determination of peoples, forced them to accept that principle without consulting them. Each country had been staking out its own particular moral or material claims with much of the same independence and disregard of other peoples' requirements, and it was over this welter of selfishness and idealism that Clemenceau was called upon to preside after the signature of the armistice.

A man less careless of his personal vanity and reputation than Clemenceau, especially as shrewd a judge as he of dramatic propriety, would have declined the responsibilities of peace. None could have reproached him with shrinking cowardice. He had taken office with the intention of "making war, and nothing but war"; his talents had always been held to be those of a fighter, not of a peacemaker. And what finer farewell speech

could any great figure in history hope to utter than that delivered by Clemenceau to the Chamber of Deputies on 11th November? He said: "What is happening in our days is the most grandiose adventure known to history. As for myself, my life, which at times I have found wretchedly long, has enabled me to travel the long and hard road from the crime committed at Bordeaux (1871) to the liberation of Metz, Strasbourg, Colmar, and Mulhouse. I spoke to a young girl in Strasbourg of her joy. She replied: 'We can laugh now; we have cried so much.' Some day the story of the heroic sacrifices of those fifty years must be told. I knew that the Alsatians were heroes, I knew that they had never lost their love for France; but when, after forty-eight years of martyrdom, when the German Press was telling them each day that France was lost, they found themselves carried to the crest of a wave of triumph, after seeing an unhoped-for victory, then I really knew how great they were. Children to whom our tongue had been forbidden, suddenly spoke French. Those who could not speak French, knew enough to sing the *Marseillaise* and cry, 'Vive la France!'" The attitude of Alsace, Clemenceau concluded, should teach a lesson of the strength of union, prudence, self-sacrifice, and discipline. Those should be the watch-words of France in the future.

In reading the terms of armistice to the Chamber of Deputies, Clemenceau said: "Now that I have read this text, it seems to me that this splendid, great and terrible moment marks the end of my task."

It would perhaps have been better for Clemenceau's

popularity, if not for his fame, had he acted upon this impression and withdrawn then from public life, leaving to others the perils of world peace negotiations and the ingratitude of peoples.

XIX. PEACE

The unpreparedness for war of the Allies found its counterpart in the absence of any solid programme of peace. War had become such a normal condition that, mentally and morally, the European combatants were almost lonely without it. There was no peace policy based upon any generally accepted principles, and applicable, even roughly, to the settlement as a whole. Instead each country had its own particular interests of economic, political, and military strategy to be served.

The British Empire alone found itself concerned in every field of the vast peace settlement and, while British policy was mainly governed by the traditional desire to prevent any one power's acquiring military or economic supremacy in Europe, and by strategical necessities arising out of Britain's special position as an island empire, yet, even with such, some measure of compromise was possible.

A country whose foreign policy is subject to the stabilising influence of both her political institutions and her interests; the continuity of whose policy, while it may be momentarily interrupted by the accident of circumstances, or the unlucky speculation of rash statesmen; above all, an island state such as Great Britain, may

indulge in an occasional departure from tradition without meeting with irretrievable disaster. Political instability, long land frontiers, diminishing population and war-wrecked country, dictated with almost imperative harshness the peace aims of France at the Paris Conference. They were contained in the two words Reparations and Security, the return of Alsace-Lorraine to France admitting of no discussion.

While Mr. Lloyd George came to Paris representing a Coalition Government, while even President Wilson had attached to his delegation a representative—even if a colourless figure—of his Republican political opponents, Clemenceau refused to contemplate the advisability of adding to the strength of his position as French negotiator by the inclusion of other representative statesmen in the delegation. Such action might well have improved his chances of success, which grew steadily less with the growing relaxation of war mentality.

Before the Conference met it was clear that his days of unquestioned dictatorship were at an end. His one-man Ministry had been well adapted to war-leading, but the administrative weakness of the rest of his Cabinet became glaringly apparent immediately after the armistice, and his refusal to accept a debate upon his peace policy was sulkily received by Parliamentarians eager to share in any laurels that might be awaiting distribution.

M. André Tardieu, the ablest of Clemenceau's lieutenants at the peace discussions, has left it on record that throughout those arduous debates nothing but friendly courtesy was observed among the chief negotiators. Great differences of opinion, however, and even wider

cleavages of character, divided the chief protagonists, and while all were agreed in accepting President Wilson's famous fourteen points as the basis of any peace, each of the powers represented at the Conference had his own ideas, dictated by national interests, as to the practical construction to be placed upon them.

Fate was surely in a grimly humorous mood when she called upon Clemenceau to collaborate with Wilson and Lloyd George in constructing a League of Nations, through which the principles of the Sermon on the Mount were to receive practical, workaday application to world affairs.

For reasons which are self-evident, the cheery optimist, however mistaken he may be, is always more certain of success than is a true, but pessimistic, prophet. Soothing syrup is sure of its market. Idealism, and a belief in the progress of humanity to some higher scale of comfort or of spiritual grace, is essential to our existence. We must be persuaded that for the duration of every war the blessings of Divine Providence are reserved especially for us, and, as if to make sure of them, we must also be convinced that while our enemies are nothing better than assassins seeking to despoil us of wealth and freedom, our own war aims are in every way commendable.

Clemenceau knew full well the necessity of feeding this peculiar form of self-delusional insanity, and made no more bones about accepting President Wilson's Fourteen Points than did the Germans and the rest of the world. But his ready acceptance of them did nothing to diminish the many mental reservations they aroused within him. He was essentially a realist, a positivist, a pessimist, and

a cynic, and he was so at a moment in the history of the world when such mental attitudes were by no means well quoted in the world's opinion. Just as in the war to be a pacifist was considered a crime, so today, in a world wrecked and riven by war, it is regarded as an act of treachery towards the future of the race to be a reasoned pessimist, to point out that the mere fact that mankind had just proved itself capable of folly on a more grandiose scale than had, up till then, been considered possible, by no means closed the way to further demonstrations of frenzy.

Man has, after all is said, a number of reasons for disbelief in the essential maternal kindness of Nature, who, at more than one moment in history, has shown a painful readiness to resort to the use of the slipper in dealing with her unruly children. Clemenceau, who in his youth had shaken hands with one of the makers of the Great Revolution, who had passed his life amid toppling thrones and falling Governments, who was nursed up in the tradition of Franco-German rivalry along the Rhine, was no idealist, and this statement does not of necessity mean that he was either a fool or a rogue. He was merely a man, unusual in the vigour of his character and his acts, who, after leading an almost forlorn hope to a somewhat forlorn victory, still kept his vision cleared of illusion. He was perfectly willing to believe that in an anaemic world there would be no blood-letting; that, if the doctrines of the Sermon on the Mount in the original, or in the revised Washington version, were loyally followed by all humanity, there would be no war; and to imagine that in a world peopled exclusively

by Princeton Professors, war, if it existed at all, would at least become polite.

But in the actual settlement of peace he had to think of other things. He had to think of France and her security. These two problems absorbed all his interests. He was quite willing to play about with Wilson's League of Nations and his self-determination, so long as they did not affect these two French interests by misleading France into believing in the efficiency of either notion as a safeguard on the Rhine.

He defined his attitude towards the League long before the Armistice, when, with exaggerated solemnity, he informed the Chamber of Deputies that if he had a League of Nations in his pocket he would at once produce it, but that in the meantime he would wait for M. Léon Bourgeois, whom he had asked to form a committee to study the question. Clemenceau's statement was greeted with sympathetic smiles from most parts of the House. It was not that he was insensible to words and ideas of generous idealism; only he did not believe in their efficiency as a barrier to German invasion, and he was by no means prepared to leave the security of French eastern frontiers to the care of an unformed body which had been deliberately deprived of any weapons by which it could enforce its decisions. Equally disinclined was he to leave settlement of French reparations to the uncontrolled honour of a reluctant Germany, sullen and revengeful in defeat. With these points settled in his favour, Clemenceau could afford to participate with patience in debates involving purely British and American interests, and could follow with some detach-

ment the efforts of Wilsonian Puritanism to strike a compromise between the criticism of the American Republican Party, the claims of his New England conscience, and the hunger of his personal vanity. The League of Nations would be an excellent debating society, provided, of course, that Germany's admission were retarded, and self-determination of peoples became an admissible product of international justice so long as it was denied to German Austria; no annexation of territory was a splendid cry so long as the mandate system provided for real colonial exploitation. Disarmament was altogether to his liking—provided always that the French army remained supreme in Europe.

Who today, with peace as insecure as ever it was, can well blame a Frenchman for having fought for such a programme, or deny to old Clemenceau the melancholy satisfaction of seeing that events so far appear to have justified his fears? The strange thing about it all is that, while in Britain critics accuse Clemenceau and France of having enforced a "Carthaginian" peace, in France his most powerful enemies accuse him of having, by lighthearted weakness, surrendered the pass; of having been either bamboozled by the seductive subtleties of the Lloyd Georgian improvisations or blinded by Wilson's imperturbable mask to any understanding of what America really thought, or led by the optimism of a demented gambler, not only to hope that America would ratify Versailles, but even deliberately to leave his countrymen in the dark as to the probability that American withdrawal from the Treaty would deprive it of all value in French eyes, by destroying those very guar-

antees of peace for which not only Clemenceau, but Foch and the whole people of France had fought. It is one of the great mysteries of the Peace Conference that Clemenceau should have placed within the hands of America the whole future of his country at a time when official and unofficial despatches agreed in warning him that the Treaty would never be ratified.

France, Britain, America, and Germany have in turn been accused of having obtained all, if not more, than they hoped for from the Peace Treaty of Versailles.

American opponents of Wilson saw in him the victim of the old hatreds and rejuvenated lusts of exhausted Europe. To the French mind Clemenceau's simulated acceptance of Wilson's impracticable idealism, and the failure of his unyielding stubbornness to evade the subtle improvisations of Lloyd George, deprived France of her rights and the means of enforcing them. The British, on their side, watched with growing distrust the performance of their chief delegate on the slack wire strung between Clemenceau and Lloyd George, the latter of whom, by drawing upon himself the disapproval both of the backwoods and of the Manchester schools of political thought, may perhaps flatter himself to have steered a zig-zag, if fairly consistent, course in the middle of the way.

Clemenceau had one great advantage over his British and American colleagues; he had not to worry much about his own political future or that of his party. A man at the age of seventy-eight has other matters than his own political prospects to occupy his thoughts, and by his refusal to accept the collaboration of any one of political eminence in the preparation of peace terms he

had shown a certain amount of pride in assuming a vast burden of responsibility.

His Ministry had been a one-man Government, and he fearlessly proposed that, so far as French interests were concerned, there should be a one-man peace. Among his political colleagues, Tardieu alone carried weight, by reason of his trained and acute mind, his capacity both for work and clear thinking. For his other colleagues, such as MM. Pichon, Klotz, and Loucheur, Clemenceau had nothing but a somewhat contemptuous tolerance, frequently expressed with all the cruelty of his wit. His expert advisers were many of them of a different stamp. M. Tardieu had, on Clemenceau's instructions, formidably arrayed them in expert committees, recruited mainly among the higher permanent officials of Government and the fighting services. These committees performed a vast amount of conscientious labour, and produced recommendations of French claims which, as is inevitable in such circumstances, Clemenceau frequently flicked into the waste-paper basket, to the indignation of their authors.

Even supposing it were possible to prepare a perfect peace treaty, it would be useless. In the drafting of a treaty, as in the drafting of a parliamentary bill, a compromise has to be sought between the ideal and the feasible. It is necessary to surrender or to compromise on some points in order to obtain agreement upon others, and Clemenceau was always prepared to surrender even a principle so long as its disavowal would help towards recognition of French claims upon the two points she deemed to be essential—Security and Reparations—

just as Mr. Wilson was prepared blandly to refuse to Austrian Germans the right to effect a political junction with Germany, provided that his pet scheme for the creation of a League of Nations was placed in the forefront of the Allied articles of faith.

In all the chorus of comment that sways the Versailles Treaty, no one has yet been heard to say that the Treaty is good, and it would be difficult to find in any one of the countries that signed it complete agreement as to why it is bad.

While Mr. Keynes in England holds its provisions to be inspired by the blind stupidity of conquest, and terms the treaty "Carthaginian," in France Clemenceau has fallen into popular disfavour for having let the Germans off too lightly, and he replies: "Ah, they have diddled you!" shakes his old head, plucks roses from the bushes, and tramples them underfoot in symbolic illustration of the fate that awaits the roses of France within the next quarter of a century, because French spirit and discipline have failed to exact the performance of the terms he imposed upon a defeated Germany.

Meanwhile, a new generation is arising which proclaims that "All is quiet on the Western Front," and that war has reached its "Journey's End." All other evidences of the war are denied, and Clemenceau had to defend himself from the grave against Foch's charge that he failed in his mission to secure the safety of French frontiers.

The position of the professional soldier in republican France is peculiar, and his relations with civil authority have always been singularly complicated by political,

social, and religious factors. Because the army is a real reflection of the power, thanks to general compulsory military service, it has always been popular, admiration of it affording an opportunity of self-worship which only a rigid philosopher can reject. But if the army has always been democratic and popular, its officers, and the undemocratic discipline they represent, have frequently been very much out of public favour. Aristocratic traditions, either of birth or of intellect, die hard. Even those old families which have become reconciled to the Republic in a great many cases limit their recognition to service in the Navy and Army. The result is that, broadly speaking, the Supreme Council of War forms a class apart, is clerical, and inclined for this and other reasons to distrust the average Radical politician with his constant appeals to the mob spirit, his attacks upon religion, and upon privilege of all kinds—even upon that derived from intellectual development.

The Caillaux case showed that more than one of the few Radical Generals had been prepared to act in the interests of party. The temptation to men of the stamp of Generals Foch, Gouraud, Mangin, and Castelnau, to mention but a few of the more distinguished "clerical" Generals, to use the confidence of their men in cleansing a political régime which threatened to lead the country to disaster, must have been intense.

Clemenceau in himself had some claims upon the support of the army, but his insistence upon Parliamentary control, and the daily reminder to the General Staff contained in "Les Allemands sont toujours à Noyon," were not calculated to move them to enthu-

siasm; nor was his past, and particularly the prominent part he had played in fighting the General Staff over the Dreyfus case, reassuring. On the other hand, the relentless energy he had displayed on the Army Committee of the Senate in pressing for measures to meet the Army's requirements in guns and shells and general munitions, the vigour with which he had defended the rank and file against defeatist propaganda, the whole pugnacious character of the man, had made a deep impression. When he finally succeeded in obtaining for General Foch the supreme unified command, most of the reticences and reserves of the Higher Command towards him disappeared. Clemenceau cannot claim paternity for the idea of Unified Command. It has always been one of the ticklish problems in the conduct of every alliance in the field. Already, towards the close of 1916, the French Parliament had proclaimed the necessity of unified command. The French War Committee gave its approval a year later, and the germs of the idea found their first expression in the formation of the Supreme War Council at Versailles shortly afterwards.

It was, however, very largely thanks to the energy displayed by Clemenceau immediately he came into power in November 1917 that the idea became a fact. M. Tardieu, at the end of that year, when leaving on his mission to America, told Clemenceau that he would be asked whom France had in mind for this great post, and Clemenceau said "Foch."

There is on record a conversation he had with Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson, then Sub-chief of General French's Staff at Montreuil in March 1915, in which

Sir Henry Wilson stated in his emphatic way that, until the Allies had unified command under Foch (then by no means as well known as he since became) they would not achieve victory.

Clemenceau for months had to meet the opposition of the British Government, which was dreadful of Parliamentary responsibilities if it entrusted the whole future of its great armies to foreign control, and had a natural reluctance to asking its own commanders to surrender so much of their initiative to a foreign organism, which, in the past, at any rate, had constantly been exposed to the pressure of the intense crises of French politics.

The disastrous period of the war, ushered in by the British retreat before Amiens, gave Clemenceau his chance. He used it to the full. He would not be satisfied by any half measures. Haig's first undertaking, that he would gladly follow any advice General Foch might be good enough to give him, was not enough. Foch had to be placed in an independent and dominating position, and Clemenceau rapidly drafted a note: "General Foch is entrusted by the British and French Governments with the co-ordination of the operations of the British and French armies in front of Amiens." At Foch's suggestion the last four words are replaced by those, infinitely wider in their scope, of "On the Western Front."

Foch, although capable of iron decision, of outbursts of impatience, lacked Clemenceau's brutality in dealing with men and situations. His first understanding of his mission was based upon the text agreed upon at Doullens, namely, that he had to "co-ordinate" the efforts of the two armies. He did not at the outset deem it to be either

desirable or within the scope of his new duties to impose his will upon the Allied command. He preferred negotiation and persuasion to the dictation and imposition of his intentions. The General was, indeed, reproached with his timidity by Clemenceau, who told him: "You don't command enough. Go straight to it and give your orders." Shortly afterwards, as the result of Clemenceau's initiative, the powers of Foch were extended, and he was given "the strategic direction of military operations on the Western Front." This new definition of his powers cleared the atmosphere of doubt and friction, which was gathering around the two headquarters. Amiens was saved from her peril, and, with the new spirit of co-operation between the General Staff under a common head, matters improved along the front.

A man of Clemenceau's direct and courageous decision, having chosen a man for the heaviest task that has ever fallen to the lot of a soldier, was not likely to let him fail through lack of support. Clemenceau had foreseen that bad days lay ahead of him, and had steeled himself and the country to expect and to meet them; and when Germany, having been baulked in her aims on Amiens, struck successfully through the Chemin des Dames towards the Marne, he had to face the howling attack of pacifists among the Socialists and Radicals who, with some logic, saw in the piercing of the Anglo-French front on the Chemin des Dames, and in the very high casualty lists, the first fruits of Foch's exercise of Unified Command. The Tiger turned on them as his namesake would have turned upon a pack of hounds and defended Foch, against whom the attack was directed, with accents of

sincere generosity, which make the subsequent divergence of their views appear all the more regrettable. The men attacked were, he said, "fighting the grimmest battle of the war with a heroism which no words of mine are worthy to describe. And are we, for a mistake which may or may not have been made on some portion of the front; are we, before we even know what has occurred, to ask for explanations in the middle of the struggle, from a man worn out by fatigue, whose head I have seen at tragic moments fall on to his maps; is it we who are to ask such a man why, on a certain day, he did such and such a thing? Hurl me from the tribune if that is what you want, for I will not do it."

Foch and Clemenceau were two strong men with but one aim: Victory, crowned by a lasting peace. It would be extravagant to suggest that during the war they always saw eye to eye. Clemenceau had felt that in the "co-ordination" stages of the Franco-British military unity Foch was too ready to go round, instead of going over or through obstacles. That same feeling was around in Foch's dealings with the new American armies, jealous, with an almost budding national feeling, to retain their entity in the military melting-pot of the Western Front. There were other occasions in which the "strategic direction of the Western Front" clashed with Clemenceau's own views of the relationship of a military Commander-in-Chief and the civilian head of a Government. These, however, were passed over in silence, in obedience to the greater need of maintaining intact, and indeed, of enhancing, the military power and prestige of General Foch, who, on Clemenceau's pro-

posal, was appointed a Marshal of France in August 1918.

Clemenceau asserted in one of his semi-jocular boutades that it was bad enough to have to deal with a General, but that he was an angel of reason when compared with a Marshal! The approach of the Armistice and of peace negotiations, far from diminishing points of friction, only increased them, for, while Clemenceau, as head of the Government, naturally enjoyed an unrestricted sphere in which to exercise his decision, Foch found himself called upon to state his opinion on military matters as though they had no bearing upon and were in no way influenced by political and economic matters.

The fact was that no constitutional precedent, practice, or paragraph had in any way foreseen the vast complexities of wars waged between whole peoples. In consequence, the old system of watertight compartments, in which soldiers were responsible to the heads of their Governments solely for the conduct of military operations, and were not indeed supposed to have, let alone express, any views whatever, even upon the military effects of the economic, social, or political clauses of a peace, had become a danger, rather than a safeguard, to national security.

The first indications of such troubles had been shown already during the war in the discussions surrounding the problem of Unified Command. The difficulties became very much more apparent when Germany asked for an armistice. The settlement of such terms quite obviously had to be left to the soldiers, and Clemenceau immediately transmitted Germany's request for an armistice to Foch for consideration by the Allied com-

manders. Foch, without any question, acted within his duty in making of the occupation of the left bank of the Rhine and of the bridgeheads an essential part of the armistice conditions. But, as he himself has confided to M. Raymond Recouly, the armistice arrangements contained a number of conditions, which, logically developed, satisfied what he, the military leader of France, deemed to be the essential requirements of France both as regards security and reparations. "In a word," he said, "the Armistice held within it the germs of the future peace. . . ." If the Allied troops were at once to push forward to the Rhine, and occupy the whole of the left bank of the river, and some of the bridgeheads on the right bank, as a security and a means of pressure upon Germany, France had at once to co-ordinate the essential elements of her Rhineland policy.

As that Rhineland policy may well be held to have dominated a large portion of the decisions at Versailles, Foch had, to that extent at least, prejudiced matters which the politicians had some reason to look upon as falling within their domain. Foch aimed indeed at establishing, by the fait accompli of armistice terms, the foundations upon which the statesmen of the world could build. Reasonably enough, a month before the signature of the armistice, he had asked to be enlightened as to the Rhenish policy France intended to pursue, seeing clearly that more than merely military matters would be affected by the terms. Foch recognised that his conditions were heavy with diplomatic and political consequences, but, as he was reminded with considerable firmness both by M. Pichon, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and by Cle-

menceau as Premier and Minister of War, any initiative on the part of a soldier in dealing with such matters was contrary to the accepted theory and practice of war and Government in France. The soldier was there to assist the statesman with his knowledge and advice when called upon to do so; any attempt on the soldier's part to discuss the political future of the Rhineland or the guarantees for reparations poached upon the politician's preserves.

This incident was embittered by a growing taste for the exercise of power which led Clemenceau to many an ill-tempered outburst of authority, and placed Foch in the position of a soldier exceeding his duty in the ardour of his attempts to enlighten what he considered to be the timid stupidity of politicians. In it were contained the origins of a quarrel the violence of which at one time threatened to bring the whole work of Versailles to naught.

XX. TIGER AND MARSHAL

To French minds it is upon Clemenceau's handling of this Rhineland problem that he must be judged. In it lay, to them, the whole vital problem of peace. They had been told, and many of them indeed still believed, that the war had been fought to end war. Mankind can bear the sufferings of its distant fellows with stolid indifference. It may give a passing thought to the folly which leads to a frontier dispute between Bolivia and Peru, but community of thought and of feeling have not yet reached a stage in which a war localised to the Pamir plateau is going to arouse the peaceful conscience of the world. Real war, like charity, begins at home. The spectacle of Russia battering down the Great Wall of China, save in its economic aspects, would leave France unmoved so long as there were no chance of her own eastern frontiers' becoming imperilled. Peace, therefore, to France, as to other countries at Versailles, meant security for herself. It was an interest shared to a greater or smaller extent by other countries whom history had shown how constantly the fight for the possession of the Rhine had upset the peace of Europe. While French claims to the unconditional return of Alsace-Lorraine had been recognised by all the Allies as an act of inevitable justice, even

in France itself the claim to the whole of the Left Bank was disputed by many, and it aroused the gravest apprehensions among the Allies as to the danger of creating another source of war similar to the Alsace-Lorraine problem. As early as 1916 France had foreseen the opposition she might have to meet when the Rhine problem came up for settlement at the Peace Conference, and had assured herself of Russian support on this point. The collapse of Russia completely altered French prospects of success. It was clear that France would have to fight hard for this point of security to which her army and all the conservative elements of the country attached vital importance.

France knew herself to be victorious, but also felt herself to be exposed to attack, while awaiting the dawn of the millennium, from a restored and rejuvenated Germany anxious to free herself from economic and political peace fetters, the very weight of which was an expression of French apprehension for the future.

No reasonable being with any knowledge of Clemenceau's character can doubt for a moment that, if peace could have been rendered secure by the simple methods of the "blood and iron" school of diplomacy, by marching the allied armies Unter den Linden, and by keeping the bailiffs in Germany until all the indefinite money claims of the allies had been satisfied, he would have been the first and most impassioned advocate of such a policy, and would have found an equally zealous collaborator in Foch.

But Foch believed that by the conditions of the armistice he not only had accomplished all that was necessary

from a purely military point of view, but had also provided France with the most certain guarantee for the payment of her reparations. It was not until some time after that, in view of the delays of the Conference, delays resulting from the very magnitude of the settlement—he proposed, without success, that the power given to France by the armistice conditions should be immediately exerted to obtain satisfaction of her essential interests, namely, the fixing of Germany's frontier and reparations.

While Clemenceau could not see his way to advocate the pure and simple annexation of German soil up to the Rhine, he nevertheless accepted Foch's first arguments that it would be necessary to deprive Germany of the military control of the river area which formed her jumping-off place for the invasion of France, and he delegated M. Tardieu, who was practically his chief-of-staff, to prepare the French case, in consultation with the Marshal.

Foch had other notable supporters including the President of the Republic, M. Poincaré, and although Clemenceau too was in favour of the project, before the armistice, rendered impatient by the pressure to which he was subjected by the advocates of a paix à l'outrance, he had already shown that he would not permit of any interference with his rights as Prime Minister.

A month before the armistice was signed M. Poincaré criticised the rough draft of the proposed terms, stating that they did not sufficiently guarantee the position of the French troops in the event of Germany deciding to continue the struggle. The President suggested that in such an event the allied troops would be hamstrung.

Clemenceau, who up till then had treated most of M. Poincaré's frequent suggestions with restive silence, replied indignantly that France could not refuse to put forward proposals for an armistice when asked to do so by America, and expressed his astonishment that Poincaré's experience of three years of personal power had not shown him the advisability of leaving to Ministers, who alone were answerable, the responsibility of their decisions. He threatened to resign if he were exposed to any further Presidential interference.

This incident, together with Foch's contemporaneous request to be informed of the Government's political Rhine policy, indicates some of the causes of the atmosphere of doubt and suspicion in which Clemenceau was called upon to preside over the Peace Conference, and to undertake the defence of French interests. Moreover, in Parliament there was much human discontent, and much dismay, no doubt legitimate, at the prospect of the Peace Conference's being in the unfettered control of the impulsive, dictatorial old Tiger. Men of talent and patriotic ambition felt aggrieved at their exclusion from the negotiations. Clemenceau was determined on his part to carry through the peace as he had carried through the war, with as little interference from Parliament as possible. His popularity in the country was still tremendous, and against it Parliamentarians did not then dare take arms.

Contradictory to the end, this Jacobin who was an aristocrat, this man of peace who was a man of war, this wrecker of Governments who was a dictator, this upholder of Parliamentary control, this enemy of censorship

and of personal power, turned into reality the empty boast of the Monarchy: "Le Roi gouverne par lui-même." Men who had faltered, men who had not dared to share his terrible responsibilities and danger during the last stages of the war, he refused to consult with regard to the settlement. Far from accepting Parliamentary control, he would not keep Parliament informed even in the most general terms of the policies he intended to pursue or of the course of the negotiations. He, the enemy of censorship, installed not only a rigid censorship upon the French Press, but was led to accept also a censorship upon all news sent from Paris during the Conference. The friend of the lowly and of the weak was most emphatic in excluding from the Council Chamber the representatives of all the smaller powers, and, with Wilson and Lloyd George, set himself up as the tribunal before which the fate of nations was to be settled.

He made peace as he had made war: with a complete disregard for the consistency of his own record, and a readiness to accept the view that the end justified the means which has laid him open to a well-supported charge of cynicism.

Clemenceau by tradition and by character was ever an "impulsif." Not for him the delicate adjustments of poise and counter-poise, the mature deliberations, the careful testing of the ground before each step was made, but the rapid, and if necessary brutal, decision to advance and to get on to the high road by the quickest path, however dangerous it might be. He remained at Versailles what he had been throughout his life: a man who climbed over and not around obstacles.

No less than twenty-seven Powers had been summoned to the Conference, and, having devised a programme of work in order to keep them employed; having held one plenary sitting conducted with a firmness which would be invaluable in the chairman of a stormy shareholders' meeting, Clemenceau decided that the real work should be done by as few people as possible. "Experience has shown me," he said, "that the smaller the committees, the greater is the chance of getting the work done. Behind us there is that great and august thing, public opinion, which won't worry as to whether this or that State has been represented on this or that committee. That is of no interest to any one. We shall be asked if we have succeeded. It is my task to conduct the labours of the Conference so that they may achieve a result."

So the Conference started with ten little nigger-boys, in the shape of the Prime Ministers, and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the United States of America, the British Empire, France, Italy, and Japan. It took the august ten six weeks to discover that Clemenceau was right, and the Council cut itself down to four men, who, however earnestly they considered the counsel of their own advisers and listened to each other's experts, became the autocrats of peace. Each of them had his appreciations of international events coloured by his own domestic situation. Wilson and Lloyd George had their general political positions to consider, while Clemenceau, sure of national support, could only in the last resort, as President of the Conference, appeal to it, and he was acutely conscious of the pressure exerted over him by Poincaré, Foch, and other men who had influence over

French public opinion, particularly in regard to the all-important future of the Rhine. In this respect it was unfortunate for him that he had to deal with the representatives of two countries, one, thousands of miles away, that had never known invasion, and the other an island empire with a foreign policy which had for centuries been devoted to preventing the creation of any greatly predominant power in Europe.

The history of another people's country, however graphically recited, however acutely understood, can never arouse the real sympathy which comes from common experience.

Clemenceau, referring later to difficulties of this nature, said with justice, and it is clear that he referred in part at least to the Rhine negotiations: "Our allies' state of mind is not of necessity the same as ours, and when we are not in agreement with them it is unfair either to accuse those who have failed to convince them, or to accuse them by attributing to them evil intentions which they do not entertain. What do you expect? Each of us lives within the framework of his own history. As Comte has truly said, 'We live on our dead.' We are surrounded by a history which has its hold upon us, which pushes us forward to fresh efforts. How can you expect a man to give up his history at the very time when he has shed all the blood of his countrymen in order to preserve it? It's impossible. Men retain the sum of their qualities and their defects. You have to take them as they are. As for myself, because the allies disagree with me, even on very important matters, I don't think it necessary to follow the suggestion that I should break

with them. There is the chief difficulty: We could not break, and break in conditions which would have led public opinion with one accord to blame those responsible for the rupture. We must not be astonished by the resistance we have had to encounter. The one said or thought: 'I'm English,' and the other thought: 'I'm American.' They have as much right to say that as we have to call ourselves Frenchmen. They sometimes made me suffer cruelly."

This is but another way of expressing the self-evident truth that, in such a settlement, compromise was inevitable. Unfortunately for Clemenceau he found himself forced to make concessions on the vital point of the Rhine. Although the actual discussion of that point did not come to a head before the Big Four until March 1919, after Wilson's return from America, and Clemenceau's recovery from the attempt upon his life, the doctrine of France had been firmly established by successive Governments during the war, and the technical side of the question had been considered in great detail by Foch, who, in a note to the allied Generals, examined French requirements on the Rhine, in a note of historical importance, for its conclusions were accepted by Clemenceau as the basis of the chief demand made by France at the Conference.

The fight upon this matter was held to be vital to France. Upon its result depended the whole future moulding of Europe. It had an even greater significance, for it was the first great trial of strength between the old and the new methods of ensuring peace. On the one side were ranged the history, traditions, and experience

of old peoples who had learned in the anguish of defeat and the humiliations of invasion to keep their frontiers guarded and their powder dry. Such methods of guarding the marches had proved their worth when applied by strong, resolute, and watchful wardens. On the other side were ranged the moral forces of the world; vague and evanescent hosts formed by the armies of hope and of trust. On the one side experience armed by doubt only used idealism as a recruiting-sergeant, with the slogans of Justice and Freedom, while on the other idealism tried to give substance to its battle-cries of Humanity with a League of Nations, whose alliances and sanctions were as vague as the ideas for whose service they were called into being.

Nothing more graphically reveals men's ability to sleep quietly in their beds under the menace of disaster than the indifference of oblivion into which have fallen the warnings not only of Foch and his soldiers, but also of Clemenceau, Poincaré, and most of the statesmen of France with regard to the Rhine.

"Henceforward," wrote Foch, in his note of 1919, "the Rhine must be the western military frontier of the Germans. . . . This is for the present and the near future an indispensable guarantee of peace." Clemenceau decided, after close study, to support Foch's demand for the military removal of Germany from the left bank of the Rhine, and charged M. Tardieu to prepare an answer to the objections which he foresaw would inevitably be raised to this proposal. Its conclusions were that, as the security essential to France could not be obtained merely by German disarmament or by the

League of Nations, Germany's western frontiers must be formed by the Rhine. M. Tardieu proposed the formation of an independent Rhineland State and the occupation of the country by the allies and of the bridgeheads across the river. Clemenceau could be, and was, under no illusion as to Great Britain's attitude; Mr. Balfour in 1917, in denying the existence of any understanding with France aiming at the creation of independent States along the Rhine, had declared that such a solution had never been part of British policy. Lloyd George had never missed an opportunity during the peace discussions of voicing his fears lest they should create new Alsace-Lorraines. He had remarked, as M. Tardieu notes, "On my first visit to Paris the strongest impression made upon my mind was the sight of the Statue of Strasbourg in mourning; let us see to it that Germany cannot erect such a statue."

Clemenceau had found Wilson fairly amenable at the outset of these conversations, and his chief opponent was Lloyd George. During Wilson's absence in America he did his best, in a series of interviews, to shake the British Premier's almost instinctive distrust of a settlement which, however artfully flavoured with political expedients, smacked too much of the old imperialism the war had been waged to destroy, to win approval from British palates.

Time after time Clemenceau returned to the attack. Marshal Foch, who was not a delegate to the Conference, declared through Raymond Recouly that only by "cold and obstinate determination" could France hope to get the better of Lloyd George's resistance.

Clemenceau cannot with any justice be reproached on

that score. Obstinacy had been the Tiger's chief strength of character, and he showed himself both cold and hot in the display of it. The Marshal, with an honesty that does him credit, did not seek to hide his feeling that if Clemenceau had but utilised his military prestige and his personal popularity he might have obtained greater results.

Wilson, on his return to Paris on 14th March 1919, had a long and completely private conversation with Lloyd George, which doubtless had the effect of making him see, in French insistence during his absence from Paris, an intention to confront him on his arrival with a complete Franco-British understanding in favour of the French thesis. Clemenceau and Lloyd George met him at the Hotel Crillon in the afternoon. Clemenceau quickly found that Wilson's attitude had changed from one of comparatively benevolent neutrality to one of active opposition. No method of persuasion was left untried; Clemenceau once again set forth the historical, military, and political claims of France, not to German territory on the left bank, but to definite and material guarantees. It was easy to prove that such guarantees could not, at any rate for a considerable length of time, be furnished by the League of Nations; that the disarmament of Germany, and the demilitarisation of the Rhine, went but a little way towards satisfying the right of the "frontier of freedom" to solid protection, which alone could safeguard France—the complete political and military withdrawal of Germans from the left bank of the Rhine, and the permanent occupation of the bridgeheads across which Prussia had always launched her invading armies in the past.

The recapitulation of these pleas was met for a time by a restatement by Lloyd George of his arguments against the creation of an ever-open source of trouble in Western Europe. Neither Lloyd George nor Wilson would agree to any amputation of German territory by the creation of an independent Rhineland, nor to the allied occupation declared by France to be indispensable to the world's peace. Clemenceau, with his blunt decision, refused to sign any peace without those guarantees. Four invasions in a century was enough, and too much, to expect any country to support, and only by pushing Germany across the Rhine, and by a permanent guard along the river, could another attack upon France be rendered impossible.

Thus confronted by Clemenceau with the prospect of a breakdown of the Conference upon the most vital point submitted to its solution, President Wilson and Lloyd George, with what degree of reluctance, with what calculation of their justification, they alone knew, offered, as an alternative guarantee, the full support of their countries' naval and military strength in the event of France's being attacked.

Clemenceau asked time to study the offer in all its bearings, and finally he felt himself bound, in accepting the proffered alliance—the British contribution to which was made conditional to America's undertaking—to forgo all idea of making the Rhineland politically independent of the rest of Germany, while still continuing to fight for the occupation of those territories and of the bridgeheads.

Clemenceau fought to the bitter end upon each point of the occupation controversy which followed, and

returned again and again to the charge with regard to Rhineland independence, long after the offer of an Anglo-American guarantee of security. Hardly a day passed throughout March upon which he did not seek some fresh and more convincing argument in favour of the French thesis. Lloyd George and Wilson were exposed to a bombardment of notes, reports, and memoranda, by which Clemenceau and his lieutenants not only sought to show the vital necessity of Rhineland independence to French safety, and the guarantees it offered for the protection of the Channel ports against any hostile designs of Germany against England, but also ransacked history to prove that if the inhabitants of that much-coveted strip of territory were not actually French in sympathy, they were certainly not Prussian in origin, and might even welcome an opportunity of separating their political fate from that of a defeated Germany. Clemenceau's oft-repeated argument was: "You Americans, you are a long way off and are guarded by the ocean. Even Napoleon never got to England. By claiming the whole of the German fleet and her colonies England has completely covered herself. We are exposed to invasion; we want security. You allowed Prussia to establish herself on the left bank of the Rhine in 1815. See what that has led to. You cling to naval supremacy; how can you be surprised if we clamour for material protection on the Rhine?"

But he was fighting a rearguard action, which even the intervention of Marshal Foch could not convert into a victorious offensive. The Marshal suffered acutely during the whole of the peace negotiations. In his quiet way

he had a lot of the Napoleon about him. If Raymond Recouly has drawn a faithful portrait of his hero, Foch was keenly conscious of his own share in winning the war, and indeed would have won it much sooner had he only been placed in a position of control and command at an earlier date.

Of the Marshal's military services, and the loftiness of his patriotism, and his high and humane conception of duty, it would be difficult to write with exaggeration, but as a statesman he was probably as Clemenceau would have been as commander-in-chief. It irked him to find that, thanks to some juggling in the Constitution, the victory the allied armies had won under his command was to be given its lasting expression under the influence of political considerations; that the army and its leader were looked upon as the architects of a house which other people were to inhabit and adapt according to their needs. It irked him, as indeed it does any Frenchman, to discover that peoples of other countries and other races have their own special requirements, their intimate fears, their traditions, and that they are in certain circumstances even prepared to look upon them as being even more important than the interests of France.

Foch, moreover, was without guile in the advocacy of his case. Denied entry to the deliberations of the Big Four, he was unable to appreciate the weight of Anglo-Saxon opposition against which Clemenceau had to fight on the Rhineland, and was unable, even had he been willing, to adapt his arguments to the changing atmosphere around the Big Four.

Feeling as he did that Clemenceau had not made full

use of his prestige in convincing Wilson and Lloyd George, Foch had nevertheless sent to the Conference three long and detailed notes setting forth his case: the first dated 22nd November 1918, the second 10th January 1919, and the third on 31st March 1919, when the battle was already lost.

On that day Clemenceau summoned the Marshal to attend a meeting of the Big Four, to which were also invited the allied Commanders-in-Chief. Foch went again over the ground covered by his previous memoranda, and concluded: "If we do not hold the Rhine in a permanent manner there can be no neutrality, no disarmament, no written clause of any nature to stop Germany from seizing the Rhine and debouching from it advantageously. The Rhine today remains a barrier indispensable to the safety of the peoples of western Europe, and therefore of civilisation. In such circumstances it would be difficult to deny to the nations in the forefront of war, France and Belgium, the protection which they deem indispensable to their existence if they are to fight until their allies arrive. Whether the inhabitants of the left bank of the Rhine remain or do not remain German, the Rhine is the military frontier of the western European nations against Germany. I earnestly call upon the allied and associated Governments, who at the most critical period of the war placed the leadership of their armies and the future of the common cause in my hands, to consider that that future can only be ensured in lasting fashion by the military frontiers of the Rhine and its occupation by the allies."

Silence followed Foch's impassioned appeal, and when,

five days later, the whole question was again considered by the Chiefs of State, the King of the Belgians, whom Foch had associated in his demand, refrained from insisting upon a prolonged occupation of the Rhine, let alone its political independence.

The crisis had again come to a head. The *George Washington* was ordered to Brest as an indication of Wilson's impending departure, but Clemenceau, making the best of a bad job, fought on for the occupation, and finally carried his point of view as expressed in the Treaty of Versailles.

But having at length reached an agreement with Wilson and Lloyd George, and before even the nature of that solution had been made public, Clemenceau had to meet the violent opposition of his own countrymen. Foch, true to his victorious maxim, refused to recognise defeat, and, with a courage which in one of his subordinates he might have qualified in other terms, threw the whole of his weight on the side of those politicians who were, doubtless quite patriotically, opposed to the Government of which the Marshal was the chief military adviser.

In judging the actions of eminent men there is always a tendency to paint them black or white. The compromise of grey is seldom admitted. Foch, when he had first sought for information with regard to the Rhine policy of the Government, had been told courteously but firmly by Clemenceau to mind his own business. The Marshal, not without reason, continued to think that he was responsible for the military security of France, and that, as French military safety could only result from the

Peace Treaty as a whole, he was entitled to full information with regard to the progress of the negotiations.

Clemenceau having to deal on his side with personalities and with political factors with which the Marshal could have no possible acquaintance, and being in the long run the bearer of full responsibility for the Treaty to be made, refused to give to a soldier the rights and powers which republican France has always jealously reserved for the politician.

Both Foch and Clemenceau knew full well that the attempt to establish an independent Rhineland, and a permanent occupation of the Rhine bridgeheads, had been the accepted policy of every war Government in France, including that of Clemenceau himself. Both, moreover, were thoroughly aware that throughout the war the French Government had always anticipated British opposition on this point. Clemenceau was better able to judge the weight of that antagonism, for he had heard it developed in accents of increasing firmness, first by Lloyd George, and then by Wilson, and he had finally been forced to struggle desperately, to contemplate resignation, in order to obtain, not the independence of the Rhineland and the permanent control of the bridgeheads by the allies, but even a very greatly diminished term of occupation.

The promised guarantee of an alliance wrung from the United States of America and Great Britain was held to be quite inadequate as a substitute for the physical safety of occupation, in which alone Foch saw any hope of world-peace.

While it would be unjust to accuse all those who

encouraged Foch in his soldierly obstinacy of utilising him as a stalking-horse for their own personal ambitions, the Marshal's arguments became the point around which rallied all Clemenceau's opponents. It has seldom been possible to keep a secret long in Paris, and Foch felt himself justified by the gravity of the hour in revealing the crisis both to British and French journalists.

While the public failed fully to grasp the significance of Foch's revelations, a tremendous sensation was caused by them among informed circles. It was known that the President of the Republic, with whom Clemenceau's relations were never at any time cordial, firmly supported the Marshal's point of view, which, in spite of all Clemenceau's anger, he had urged on several occasions throughout March and April. The Rive Gauche policy had always been that of Poincaré, as it had been that of Briand. It was a later President of the Republic, M. Doumergue, a Radical Socialist, who had carried on the negotiations of 1916 which obtained Russian support for the French claim; there was a large body of Parliamentary opinion hostile to Clemenceau, and Foch felt that, in the event of his precipitating a crisis, he would have the support of the President of the Republic, and that that support would be shown in the only manner permissible under the Constitution: by the President's tendering his resignation. Foch tried to bring matters to a head on 17th April, when, refusing to obey orders, he declined to transmit the summons of the Big Four to the German plenipotentiaries for the receipt of the Versailles terms on 25th April. The next day Clemenceau had to deal with this flat defiance of Governmental authority.

At the same time he was faced with the prospect of a public debate in the Senate, and with the reproaches of his fellow-negotiators, Wilson and Lloyd George, both of whom, while admitting the great services of the man to whose leadership they had entrusted their armies, refused for a moment to have dealings with any French General who deliberately persisted in ignoring the peace decisions, not only of allied and associated representatives, but also of the head of his own Government.

By the very nature of the crisis Clemenceau was prevented from undertaking a general defence of Marshal Foch's attitude, but with warmth and reason he urged that at the stage reached by the negotiations any break must be avoided, and that it was essential to avoid in any way weakening the trust of the country in the men who had won the war. Both statesmen pressed for some reassurance that Foch would put an end to what had by then become an almost open campaign against the decisions of the Big Four.

The Marshal had made up his mind to fight with all his moral authority against the Rhine compromise accepted by Clemenceau. He appealed to his Government, to the President of the Republic, to the allies, to the Presidents of the two Chambers of Parliament, and to Clemenceau himself, asking that he should be heard by the Conference as a French delegate. Clemenceau with some abruptness refused to discuss Foch's status as a delegate, and reminded him of the undeniable fact that as Generalissimo he had to obey the allied Powers. He denied him the right to take part in the deliberations of the French delegation. Only the Government could

listen to him on military matters, and when the time came he would be called upon to state his case at a meeting of the Cabinet in the presence of the French delegation. Foch clamoured for that opportunity, threatening Clemenceau with resignation.

That meeting took place on 25th April. Foch went to it full of hope that he might, at the very last moment, succeed in obtaining the rejection by the Cabinet of the terms of peace affecting the future of the Rhine as agreed upon by Clemenceau, Lloyd George, and Wilson.

In addition to the members of the Government, there were present at the meeting the President of the Republic, MM. Jules Cambon of the French Foreign Office and Tardieu as delegates, and General Weygand as Foch's right-hand man. Clemenceau knew that, ranged against him and in favour of Foch, he had the President of the Republic and M. Jules Cambon, and that more than one member of his Ministry of Mediocrities was wavering, either in response to feeling and manoeuvres in the lobbies of Parliament, or under the effect of a sincere doubt raised in his mind by the vigorous sincerity of Foch's stand. Poincaré, by frequent intervention in the course of the negotiations, had only managed to increase the bitterness of his relations with Clemenceau, without becoming any more intimately acquainted than was Foch with the immovable resistance Clemenceau had encountered from his fellow-negotiators. The President of the Republic shared Foch's hope that an ultimatum presented by France at the very last moment might even then lead to acceptance of Foch's proposals. It was generally believed, and there are reasons for thinking

that Foch shared in the belief, that in the last resort M. Raymond Poincaré would resign from the Presidency of the Republic rather than participate in any way in the Versailles Treaty as hammered out by Clemenceau.

XXI. DIE WACHT AM RHEIN

A CONQUERING Marshal and a somewhat savage dictator form a high explosive when they meet. The historic discussion opened unhappily. While no official record was taken, General Weygand was permitted to make notes for the use of his Chief, and from these, and the recollections of Members of the Government, it is possible to obtain a good idea of what happened.

Both Clemenceau and Foch were in fighting form, and at once started sparring on questions of procedure. Their outside courtesy did nothing to hide the temper behind them. Foch started by asking that he should be informed as to the arrangement come to before discussing it, thereby marking the point which had so much upset him in the past, that he had not been kept informed of the progress of the negotiations. Clemenceau slapped back that the Marshal was not there for any discussion; that was entirely a matter for the Government. He consented, however, to tell Foch in general terms of the proposed Rhine agreement and the Anglo-American alliance guaranteeing France against aggression, and again roundly declared that if there were any discussion or deliberation of the matter he would at once withdraw from the meeting.

Foch once again produced his arguments in favour of the left bank, and ended by declaring that any one who abandoned the occupation would be guilty of betraying the interests of France. "I, for my part," he concluded, "will never agree to it." The Marshal, Tardieu and Jules Cambon, not being Ministers, were thereupon called upon to leave the room, and while the discussion broke out again among them in the ante-chambers, Clemenceau began the "hard struggle" which he had anticipated.

With whatever inopportunity the smaller sides of great men's characters may sometimes be revealed, the moment was one which left no room for insincerity. Clemenceau had been an early upholder of the Foch thesis, and had abandoned it only inch by inch, and in return for concessions which he believed to be of value. His defence of his action was delivered in the short, crisp-cut phrases which characterised his extempore eloquence, and which seemingly conveyed in sound the process of his thought and the development of his emotion. It had been impossible to persuade Wilson and Lloyd George that by restoring independence to the Rhineland its inhabitants would not in reality be brought into foreign bondage. To these two allies even the occupation of those regions would be a wrong done to the people of Germany. Instead of such guarantees of security Great Britain and America had offered an alliance. They could hardly be told that France put no trust in such an undertaking. Was it not really to the advantage of France to substitute, for an occupation which would call for heavy French sacrifices, an alliance with two such

powerful countries? Changes in modern warfare had also to be borne in mind. What protection would a French army permanently encamped along the Rhine afford against all the new inventions and the new speed warfare would command in future?

Clemenceau was followed by Pichon, and when he had finished Clemenceau waited for Poincaré's decision. Had he lived up to the Marshal's hopes and thrown all his influence in the scales against Clemenceau, his opponents and the waverers in the Cabinet might have compromised the whole of the laborious results achieved since the armistice in framing the terms of peace.

Poincaré, sacrificing his own views to the momentary needs of patriotism, declined to influence in one way or the other the decision of the Cabinet, which unanimously approved of its leader's policy. Foch, however, still remained insatiable. It is difficult to see what advantage he expected to obtain from further insistence on his arguments. They had been discussed threadbare by the representatives of the three countries most concerned; they had been examined in every detail in the spate of notes, reports, and memoranda to which the Marshal himself had been a prolific tributary. He had demanded, and been given, the widest opportunity of advocating his views before the allied Commanders-in-Chief, the Big Three which had succeeded the Big Four, the French delegation, and the French Government. His insistence had led to the raising of steam on the *George Washington*, to the threat of the resignation of the President of the Republic, and of M. Clemenceau and the whole Government of France. His conduct in declining to carry out his

instructions to summon the German delegates to receive the terms had led to the sternest observations by Wilson and Lloyd George. The Marshal, moreover, had taken steps to acquaint Parliamentarians with his differences of opinion with the Government, and had also sought to inform the Press. He had then taken ample precautions to place his views on record, and yet, in spite of all this, in spite of the unanimous decision of the Big Three, the unanimous vote of the French Cabinet, and the refusal of the Belgian Government to support his claims, he again returned to the charge and insisted upon being heard at a plenary sitting of the Conference on 6th May, only twenty-four hours before the presentation of the terms of peace to Germany at the Trianon Palace Hotel at Versailles.

The heads of the Governments in conference afterwards agreed that in his fresh exposé Marshal Foch had produced no valid reason for any alteration in the terms. Far from achieving his purpose, the Marshal had, in fact, by his stubbornness, weakened the position of France and revived British doubts as to the wisdom of any occupation of German territory on the lines obtained by Clemenceau. The Marshal had also, by his almost open attitude of hostility, considerably weakened his personal prestige, and had led Mr. Bonar Law, the most moderate-tempered of men, to exclaim: "If a British General adopted such an attitude towards his Government he wouldn't keep his post for five minutes."

Clemenceau, as previously before the Chamber at the time of the disastrous attack on the Chemin des Dames, was still insistent in his defence of Foch, and, while

admitting to Bonar Law how deeply pained he was by the Marshal's attitude, begged him to remember the magnitude of their countries' debt towards the great soldier who had led their troops to victory.

Foch, however, by his very insistence, had given some substance to the historical British dread of reviving French dreams of the military "swagger" dear to the hearts of the Empire, but extremely upsetting to the nerves of peaceful Europe. France had groped her way to peace, victorious though it was, through too deep a slough of blood and mud for any popular jingo spirit to be left. But Foch was known to represent the views of a large number of general officers whose patriotism had suffered too intimately by the mistakes and evils of democracy to incline them to leave the future of France entirely in the hands of its political leaders.

The British and American estimate of German character differed profoundly from that of France, who had a memory of defeat. Lloyd George and Wilson, anxious to encourage the economic and industrial revival of Germany, desired to make a peace which would deprive of justification any "revenge" movement in Germany, while France, rendered by experience distrustful of German professions of good faith, realised and accepted with heavy heart that nothing but strength could be used in arguing with Germany.

The terms of peace were presented to the Germans on 7th May, and were received in no grateful spirit by Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, whose harsh voice and rasping delivery brought the old atmosphere of the German barrack-square into the home of peace. On 29th May he

stigmatised as a peculiarly odious abuse of force the clauses of the terms dealing with the occupation of the Rhine. In so doing he only confirmed the impression he had given to all those who witnessed the presentation of the terms to Germany.

Clemenceau, worn out with the incessant strain of keeping the Conference going through the crises of Danzig, Silesia, the Adriatic, and disarmament, made acutely conscious by Foch of the criticism to which his own handling of French security and guarantees exposed him, was in a truculent and malicious mood. The old man with the grey gloves he always wore on account of skin trouble informed Count Rantzau curtly that "this second Peace of Versailles had been too dearly bought for the victors not to ask for full satisfaction of their claims." He informed the Count that Germany would be given fifteen days in which to submit her observations on the terms. Count Rantzau replied to Clemenceau from his chair. His face was so pale that physical inability to rise seemed to be the obvious excuse of his apparent discourtesy in not following Clemenceau's example and delivering his remarks standing up. He took his country's medicine badly. His anger was apparent, not only in the tone of his voice, but also in the tenor of his speech. He came there as an equal prepared to collaborate in the restoration of European peace and prosperity, and indignantly refused to wear the white shirt of penitence.

Clemenceau was frankly amused by the confirmation Count Rantzau thus furnished of his own prophecies as to Germany's attitude, and his amusement turned to imp-

ish, boyish cruelty when, in a voice as loud and as discordant as that of a buzzard, Count Rantzau's interpreter bellowed forth in incomprehensible Chicago-German-American a translation of his remarks. Lloyd George nervously played with the black ribbon of his glasses while this speech was being translated, and it soon became apparent that the German attitude had made an impression on his mind that the terms would in the long run be refused by Germany, or would only be accepted with a firm intention on her part to rewrite them with the sword at the earliest possible opportunity.

The whole Rhineland compromise was jeopardized. Lloyd George returned again and again to the point of view that the occupation clauses would be intolerable to Germany, and that from them would spring another European war. Both he and Wilson renewed and strengthened their pressure upon Clemenceau on the point, and for a moment it looked as though Clemenceau's long, but at least partially successful, resistance, which had given France the promise of an Anglo-American alliance (a promise which American non-ratification of the Treaty rendered valueless), in addition to the occupation clauses, would again be placed in question, owing to British fears of too Draconian a peace, and to joint Anglo-American resolute refusal to help France to destroy German unity and bring about the collapse of the German State.

Clemenceau's position was cruelly awkward. He had, time after time, risked the whole continuance of the Conference by his efforts to curb the blunt impulsiveness of Marshal Foch, and, while the debate was resumed,

Clemenceau had to deal with what almost amounted to open insubordination on the part of some of Foch's lieutenants on the Rhine. He found it extremely difficult to explain why, after the occupation clauses had been accepted by Britain and America on the basis that France only sought a military guarantee on the Rhine, French Generals, and in particular that brilliant soldier Mangin, should be working actively to encourage the formation of an independent Rhenish Republic. The abortive attempt of Dr. Dorten in this sense, supported as it was by the French army leaders, came at a singularly inopportune moment for Clemenceau. However, he again dug his toes in, and, after renewed threats of resignation from Lloyd George and from Clemenceau, the latter maintained his point of view and the occupational clauses remained unchanged in the Treaty.

This was but one, if the most important, point in which arose the vital question of German unity. Not unnaturally France enjoyed the prospect of German defeat unbuilding what German victory had erected, and would have welcomed, and did indeed encourage, all signs of the cracking up of the bonds which had linked the various old States of Germany in the Empire. General Mangin's designs, and the flagrant French support given to the tragi-comic opera of Rhineland separation under Herr Matthes, were all manifestations of that hope which found its first expression at the Peace Conference when the powers of the German delegates were under examination. M. Jules Cambon, formerly French Ambassador in Berlin, managed to obtain Clemenceau's assent to an attempt to perpetuate the somewhat Ruritanian fiction

of the diplomatic independance of Bavaria, and the necessity of her independent representation at the Conference.

The effort met with no success, and Clemenceau, with his customary directness, went straight to the heart of the matter in a Senate debate, in the course of which he had been attacked for not having destroyed Germany as a political entity.

"There is only one deep unity," he said, "and that is unity of conscience, and with that no human hand can meddle. You will not find unity in the protocol of diplomacy; it is in the hearts of men. A man loves whom he loves, and hates whom he hates, and in the hour of danger, at the moment of battle, a man knows on which side he belongs. What do you expect? There you have sixty million people with whom you have to put up. In olden days I don't know what would have been done with them. Even the Romans blunted their swords on that problem. We can't go in for such adventures."

Clemenceau was no stranger to German temperament, nor was he ignorant of the jealousies which animated some of the States of the Empire against the parvenu Prussians. But he knew full well that any attempt from the outside to exploit them could but increase instead of diminish the common bond of race and interest. In the Rhineland that was the point of view to which he finally was brought, but he refused to forgo at the eleventh hour the guarantee of security afforded by the occupation. Much criticism has been levelled at Clemenceau on account of his alleged refusal to yield for an inch in the discussion of French claims. Perhaps it is the best tribute

to his work to point out that, while such criticism came from abroad, in France his opponents accused him of having sold the pass and sacrificed too many vital French interests to the ideology of Wilson and the greedy demagogy of Lloyd George. Clemenceau was perhaps the last man in the world to believe that the Treaty made was a good treaty, either from a purely French standpoint, or looked on as a general settlement of international relations, and for that reason he was forced to hang on to the end to the guarantee afforded by occupation, which was a guarantee, not only of security, but also of the executors of the Treaty.

Clemenceau was under no misapprehension on the latter point. He saw with great clarity that the Treaty was liable in a hundred different ways to remain ineffective; that while whole chapters of its terms had been drafted, not so much with the idea of carrying them out, as of obtaining momentary satisfaction for some mob demand (such as the "Hang the Kaiser" movement), others which were vital might well be exposed by lack of vigilance, by the changing play of international friendships, to radical and dangerous revision.

Events for good and for evil have at least justified his apprehensions in this respect. Clemenceau in his retirement could think with some bitterness upon such criticisms of his policy as in his view arose, not so much from the provisions of the Treaty he did so much to forge, as from the non-execution of many of its clauses by those who came after him. He had perhaps only his own optimistic pessimism to blame for his disappointment. In the piecing together again of the vast jig-saw of international

life more than one rounded bit of the puzzle had to be dropped into a square hole, and a treaty such as that of Versailles is not, and never could be, intended to be a permanent structure. In its broadest sense it provided the lines upon which future efforts would seek to build a habitable house of peace. The signing of that plan was the beginning, not the end, of the task of its architects and builders.

M. Clemenceau, in speaking on the ratification of the Treaty, said: "You must not think that after such a cataclysm we are going to submit copy-books, and that after they have been voted and ratified by Parliament the whole thing will be over; that we will all be able to go home feeling that our wrongs are then in process of being righted, that precautions have been taken against its happening again, and that every one will be able to say, 'We have our bit of paper. Now we can sleep quietly.' Well, that's not so. Human life is not made up of sleep. Life is only a struggle, and you will never prevent that struggle. I think of life as a perpetual fight, both in war and in peace. I think Bernhardi has said: 'War is policy pursued by other methods.' We can turn round the aphorism and say that 'peace is a war carried on by other means.' When you analyse a treaty, which has heaven knows how many articles dealing with every question, you must not forget that the complicated text will only be worth what you are worth; it will be what you make it."

But a treaty cannot possibly be the work of one people, let alone of one man. The Treaty of Versailles was not the work of Clemenceau. It is not the reflection of what

Keynes and other foreign critics have held up to scorn as Clemenceau's arrogant spirit of triumph, any more than it reflects what French critics consider the victory of Anglo-Saxon firmness over Clemenceau's weakness and readiness to surrender. It is an imperfect instrument devised by sinful humans, whose duty it was to their own peoples and to their fellow-negotiators to voice in the most successful manner what they felt to be their countries' needs, and when those needs were in conflict, to seek the best possible compromise.

It is fortunately not my task to write a history of the Peace Conference, save in so far as it throws light upon the character and ideas of Georges Clemenceau. If, therefore, I have devoted special emphasis to the discussion of the Rhineland problem, it is because therein seems to me to lie the clearest example of the vigour with which Clemenceau fought for the interests of France, whether they were represented by security on the Rhine, in the building-up of Poland and the other States to the east of Germany, which he held to be necessary to take the place of Russia, or in exacting the full payment for German damage, as in the long-drawn-out fight with President Wilson over the cession of the Saar mines and the refusal to determine the lump sum of German indebtedness.

When he, Wilson and Lloyd George rose for their signature of peace, in the same glittering gallery where, nearly half a century before, the German Empire had been proclaimed, and stepped out to receive the delirious thanks of the multitudes assembled on the terrace, around the fountains, and along the broad avenues of the Park,

Clemenceau tasted a moment of happiness such as few men have known, and none has probably been able to suffer without tears. And none knew better than he how vain and evanescent such happiness was destined to be.

He had been made acutely aware of the hostility aroused by his action in keeping all the main threads of the peace negotiations in his own hands, and knew that, when the time came to obtain Parliamentary approval and ratification of the Treaty, he would have to use to the full the already waning popularity of his Government in the country. He determined, however, to carry things through to the end, and not only to remain in office until all the Treaties had been ratified, but also, by presiding over the approaching General Elections, to mobilise the country for what he had called the "War of Peace," which, as he rightly foresaw, would call for an even stronger national discipline than had the "War of Victory."

In the Chamber of Deputies the Committee appointed to report upon ratification was presided over by M. Léon Barthou, who, by his criticism, voiced the discontent of the Chamber at having been ignored during the seven months of the negotiations. "You," he said to Clemenceau, "rendered great services to the country during the war. You were not alone. You threw into it all your intelligence, ardour and patriotism, and the way in which you rendered homage to the heroism of our soldiers, while it magnified them, did not diminish you. But in the peace negotiations you have acted alone, and you would have none of the collaboration of Parliament. Yours will be the glory, and yours also the responsibility."

In the course of the debate upon ratification the old complaints as to the inadequacy of French frontier security, and the lack of guarantees for the payment of reparations by Germany, were again raised, but with the timidity of a House which knew its days were numbered.

Discontent in the country, as apart from Parliament, was due more to dissatisfaction with Clemenceau's Ministerial colleagues, than with the Premier's own conduct at Versailles. Clemenceau, when reproached with the inefficiency of his colleagues to deal with economic and financial problems, jokingly replied: "Well, it wasn't eagles that saved the Capitol."

The public was worried almost past endurance by complicated and constantly changing methods of raising fresh revenue, by the uncurbed activities of the peace profiteer, by a complete failure to adjust wages to the ever-increasing cost of living. Strikes of every imaginable kind broke out all over the country, involving grave-diggers, treasury officials, railways, coal-miners, and leading to a sense of instability which Communists and other fomenters of social discontent tried hard to exploit with revolutionary intent.

It was this state of affairs which provided Clemenceau with his slogan for the General Elections. The French middle-classes, thoroughly alarmed by the progress of Bolshevism in Russia and Central Europe, responded immediately to Clemenceau's appeal to rally to the support of social order. The new Parliament formed under his leadership was strongly national in feeling. Almost its first duty was to elect a successor to Poincaré,

whose term of office as President of the Republic had expired.

The friends of Clemenceau had done their utmost to persuade him to become a candidate for the Presidency of the Republic. They pointed out to him that only from that position could his authority over Parliament, and his hold upon public opinion, be effectively used during the critical first seven years of the execution of the Treaty of Versailles. Clemenceau, who in the past had always held "the Prisoner of the Elysée" in somewhat contemptuous pity, as a man who had sacrificed the substance of political power for the shadow of Presidential pomp, professed to treat the insistence of his friends with indifference. But, as the date of the election came nearer, when after a brief holiday his tired spirit was refreshed, he began to flirt with the idea; the vanity which lies in every man whispered to him that the Presidency would be a fitting end to his career, although his sense of humour was tickled at the idea of Georges Clemenceau, the breaker of Presidents, the Jacobin, the gamin, who throughout his life had disrespectfully grinned at all the dignitaries of the Republic, in turn having to spend the rest of his life in a tall hat and evening clothes under the ever-watchful eye of a Master of Ceremonies. Finally he let it be known that, if the Republican parties, and the people as a whole, showed unmistakably their desire to have him at the head of the Republic, he would accept their wishes.

That he was wanted by general public opinion could not be questioned, but in Parliament, in spite of its being a body fashioned by Clemenceau himself in the elections,

other considerations came into play. He had done nothing during his term of office to soften his reputation as a tyrant, and Parliamentarians, holding him in greater fear than ever, were not enthusiastic at the idea of such an experiment of placing a really strong man at the head of affairs. At the Republican party caucus meeting his candidature was opposed by that of Paul Deschanel, who represented the moderate, almost aristocratic, literary wing of French Radicalism. Republicans were equally divided by the two men, and as Paul Deschanel was certain to obtain at Versailles in the voting of the National Assembly the support of the clerical Right, and the army influence against Clemenceau, the atheist and devourer of Generals, Clemenceau did not present himself for election by the assembled Chambers of Parliament. Deschanel's election to the Presidency on 17th January 1920 marked the end of Clemenceau's fifty years of political life.

XXII. MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD

Clemenceau's first book—*De la Génération des Eléments Anatomiques*, par le Dr. G. Clemenceau, Paris, 1865—by its very title cast a prophetic shadow. It was the thesis of the young medical student whose whole life was to be spent in investigating the generation and nature of the social, political, philosophical, and artistic elements which make up the anatomy of human life. No politician can become complete, or rather can lift himself from the plane of a party leader to that of a national, let alone a world statesman, by the mere gifts of speech, energy, and lucidity of thought. He must seek that lifting power either in the natural resources of character, or in the development of broad culture. By his origins Clemenceau was furnished with character, and the sheer intensity of his disbelief spurred his curiosity as to the nature of life and mankind, and urged him along paths of philosophical inquiry and appreciation of art which are usually untrodden by public men. In fact, had Clemenceau never touched politics he would nevertheless have left his mark as a writer.

Even the tremendous demands of French public life by no means exhausted his physical and mental energies. The world was his oyster, and it would be difficult to

decide whether he found most useful in opening it the sword, the pen, or the spoken word. He took his share of the labours which, under the French system of Parliamentary Committees, fell to the private member; he was a constant speaker, and although he only held office for little over four years, throughout the rest of his political life he was the constant leader of the Opposition, a position which he maintained as a journalist, after his electoral defeat, with even greater vigour and success than when he was a deputy.

Literature and journalism are fortunately not yet divorced from each other in France, and even to-day there is many an article to be found in the Press which is more of an essay than an article. It was in such short outlines of life and beings that Clemenceau excelled, and he possessed to a supreme degree the art of using the daily minor incidents of life as illustrations of a vast philosophy.

Early in his journalistic career he formed a method of work which he observed right up to the day when he became War Premier of France. He was at his desk, sometimes as early as two o'clock in the morning, reading the clippings of the new day's papers which had been delivered to him by the office servant immediately the papers had gone to Press. He had an instinctive sense of form, wrote rapidly in a clear printer's hand, made but few corrections, and by the end of an hour usually produced a little masterpiece, which, while in the shape of a leading article, had the grace of an essay or the charm of a *conte*.

He began as a writer in his student days under the

Second Empire, when, with a band of enthusiasts, he waged war against Napoleon III in the columns of the *Travail*, and succeeded in getting himself locked up for two months, thanks to the Republican ardour of his theatrical criticism.

When he started on his youthful excursions to England and the United States he continued his literary and journalistic work, publishing a translation of John Stuart Mill's study of Comte's *Positivism*, and noting for *Le Temps* the events in the United States during the close of the American Civil War and the political development which followed it. He was too young and inexperienced a writer to be given a free run by *Le Temps*, and his contributions, which were severely sub-edited before publication, have little or none of his ardour of thought, style, and expression. In their heaviness and caution they are in strange contrast with a letter he wrote at the time, dealing with the end of the tragic Mexican adventure of Maximilian, in which he said: "Dear Madam,—We have a bone to pick. What on earth put it into your head to lament Maximilian and Charlotte? Good heavens! I naturally know that all such folk are always charming! I grant you that at the start; they have been that for five or six thousand years. They have the recipe of all virtue, and the secret of all grace. When they smile, it is delightful; when they cry, it is touching. When they let you live, they are exquisitely kind; when they crush you, it is because of the misfortunes of their situation. Well, I'm going to tell you one thing: all these Emperors, Kings, Archdukes, and Princes are great, sublime, generous, and superb, and their Princesses are

everything you like to think of them. But I hate them with a merciless hatred, with the hatred of 1793, when people called that idiot, Louis XVI, an execrable tyrant.

"Between us and such people there is war to the death. They have killed millions of us with torments of every kind, and I wouldn't like to bet that we have killed only a mere couple of dozen of them. It is true that the class of people who exploit human stupidity is great. These people have the folk I have spoken of as their leaders, and it is they we have to aim at. I have no pity for such rascals; to sympathise with the wolf is to commit a crime against the sheep. Maximilian wanted to commit a real crime. He has been killed by those he wanted to kill. I am delighted. His wife is mad; there could be nothing more just. It almost makes me believe in Providence. It was this woman's ambition which egged on the imbecile. A great many men have been killed in order that your Charlotte might be called 'Empress.' The only trouble is that they don't seem to have killed enough. Perhaps I do regret after all that she should be mad, and unable to understand that her husband is dead because of her, and that a people is avenging itself. Don't throw responsibility upon others; if Maximilian was only a tool, the part he played is only the more vile (because there's a greatness in a fine and well-premeditated crime); but he is not the less guilty for that.

"You will see that I am ferocious, but what is worse is that I am intractable, and on that point I will never change. . . . Why the devil do you make distinctions between such individuals? Believe me, they are all the same. If there were a hell without a special cook-pot

for them, which is impossible, the good God would be lowered in my esteem. I strongly doubt that there be another atheist who regrets, as much as I do, the absence of a Providence. I would leave everything to His supreme justice, and that would absolve me from the necessity of hating. It is painful to think that all these wretches go to the same sleep as do the good people of the world. . . . I don't speak of myself, for I have nothing to say. After a long fight I have given up the last of my illusions. I await nothing, hope for nothing, and leave nothing. I am looking about for a cemetery where I can bury myself alive. Paris would do just as well as any other place."

Much of this young fury of blood-thirstiness learned discipline in the events of 1870 and 1871, and Clemenceau, although a deadly polemical writer, never indulged in the excesses of a Rochefort or a Cassagnac. When he launched himself upon the main current of journalism with *La Justice* in 1880, his experience of national as well as of municipal politics had shown him that argument, satire, irony, good-humour, or ridicule, in fact any weapon, was sharper than angry abuse.

His journalistic output was prodigious, and, apart from his daily work in his own special papers, such as *La Justice*, where he fought the Panama scandal; *L'Aurore*, where he carried on the Dreyfus campaign; *Le Bloc*, *L'Homme Libre*, and *L'Homme Enchainé*, he contributed regularly at different times to papers such as the *Dépêche de Toulouse*, *Le Journal*, *L'Echo de Paris*, and a number of foreign newspapers.

The literary excellence of much of that daily journal-

ism was clearly manifested when selections of his articles appeared in book form. Clemenceau once said that so long as he had the power to think and write he felt himself invincible. To a purist this would show that he was not really a man of letters. He had, indeed, no use whatever for intricate patterns of style or for the beauty of words as such. To him a word had to be as decisive as a deed. All his strength as a polemical writer was at the service of the weak against the strong, and every one of his articles was inspired by an impatient fury to redress social injustice.

A man of action usually has a secret preference for his more reflective moods, and Clemenceau, in whose hands a phrase was a rapier or a sledge-hammer slogan, probably would prefer to be known, not as the "Warwick of the Third Republic," not as one of the most brilliant polemical writers of his times, but as a mellow philosopher pondering upon the mysteries of life and death, the motives of thought and action. And it has to be admitted that, in spite of its aridity, his philosophy enabled him to weather storms of fortune such as have shaken the lives of but few men of his eminence, and left him robust in spirits and with much of the genial glow of a ripe russet apple.

His purely philosophical works are *In the Evening of Thought* (*Au Soir de la Pensée*), a *Life of Demosthenes*, and the monument he erected to his painter friend, Claude Monet, in tracing the cycle of life and death, followed by the *Nymphéas*, the water-lilies of the famous garden at Giverny, which inflamed the artist's palette with their rich colouring.

In the search for the philosopher's stone, however, Clemenceau is not at his literary ease. The involutions of his style betray the groping mind, and this portion of his literary work lacks the spontaneity and grace of his more general writing, in which, although the philosophical tang is nearly always there, it is expressed in pictures and comments inspired by Clemenceau's own great powers of observation of characters and things.

Those qualities are seen to best advantage in his studies of peasant life in his native Vendée, where he has told in charming fashion his first love-affair with one of those shepherdesses whose frailty adds a perfume to French folk-song. The picture of Fleur de Froment, with her white skin freckled as though by "sun dust," is beautifully done. She is youth and colour.

In *La Mêlée Sociale* the same powers of observation which gave him the freedom of his native fields are turned upon the torment and ills of social life, which, instead of killing man outright, in modern times "use him" in labour, wretchedness, and vice. Those conditions of material slum-life he described ruthlessly in a series of articles astounding by their diversity, as well as by the unity of thought which lay behind them. But here, again, as an alternative to the vision of horror he unfolds, he can only offer man the hope of a dream, and the satisfaction that he may flatter himself that he has been.

While in *La Mêlée Sociale* he deals with the problems of individual relationships, in *Le Grand Pan*, with even greater vigour, he studies the mental existence of mankind racked by speculation and shattered by events, but

from the days of Greece to those of science, for ever seeking freedom for its growth.

Action is his remedy for all this turmoil and striving. "Pan orders, we must act. Action is the principle, action is the means, and action is the aim—action, the obstinate action of each working for all; disinterested action, rising above puerile thoughts of halos, above the rewards of eternal dreams, as well as above the despair of lost battles and inevitable death—action as an ideal in evolution, the only unique strength and complete virtue."

In the great mass of his writings Clemenceau unwittingly built up, year after year, a work as comprehensive and as ordered as that consciously planned by Balzac and Zola. *Au Fil des Jours* is the country and the peasant; *La Mêlée Sociale* is modern civilisation with its prostitution, its jails, alcoholism, jumbled pell-mell with its theatres, artists, writers, and thinkers; *Aux Embuscades de la Vie* shows man fighting against the hypnotic effects of dreams and creeds, against the social web around his feet, and against his own passions. A novel, *Les Plus Forts*, and a playlet, *Le Voile du Bonheur*, practically complete his work.

Despite the demands made upon his time by public affairs, he maintained the closest friendship with many of the most brilliant literary and artistic figures of his time. He was not elected a member of the French Academy until the war, and he was not best pleased with the friendly zeal which made him an Immortal.

His tastes were far from being academic, and his friendships were formed among the rebels of his youth. They included the Goncourt brothers, with whom he

used frequently to dine at Drouant's Restaurant, where the Académie Goncourt still has its regular luncheons. At the banquet given by the most notable men in French literature to Edmond de Goncourt, it was to Clemenceau that the speech of the evening was allotted. It gave him an opportunity of showing how lofty was his idea of a writer's task: "The peasant," he said, "turns the soil, the smith forges the tool, the scientist calculates, and the philosopher dreams; men battle painfully for life, ambition, riches, or glory. But it is the solitary thinker, by his writing and activity, who determines their fate. It is he who awakens in them the thought-bearing feelings upon which they live and to which they seek to give social reality. He it is, by his persistent formulae, who spurs them to action, and to the redressal of wrongs by truth and justice. He it is who charms them with the hope of youth and makes the exhilarating appeal which leads them to life. He comforts them, restores them, and, binding their wounds, leads to tomorrow's victory the vanquished of yesterday. He opens hearts, gets inside life, reveals man to man, and, indeed, creates man in his conscience and his will. To have been for a day, for an hour, a labourer in such a task, is sufficient glory for a lifetime."

XXIII. EVENING AND DAWN

When Clemenceau withdrew from public life, he meant his retirement to be definite. Fallen from a pinnacle of fame; attacked by the malignant spite of petty men; jeered at by enemies who would have run in panic at a snarl; scorned even by his country, he had at any rate left Mount Pisgah behind him, and had been allowed to lead his people all the way to the Promised Country. He settled himself in his fisherman's cottage in La Vendée and gave himself up, after a life of rugged action, to the sedate pleasures of contemplative study. It was mainly there that his work on Demosthenes was written, and there it was that he brought to literary conclusion the life-long search of his brain to answer Fleur de Froment's query: "Why do we live?" His fighting instincts he satisfied in training his roses to withstand the salt wind from the Atlantic.

When he appeared in public it was as though to pause but for a moment on the way to his own grave to say farewell to friends and members of his family. More than once on such an occasion his feelings mastered him, but his tears were those of loss, and had nothing in them of the commiserating dread that the thought of death sometimes awakens in the hearts of the very old. His

remark after he had followed Claude Monet to the cemetery: "Today I have walked in my own funeral," was not the cry of a craven, but the lament of a friend.

In his last illness in 1929, in which his power of resistance astonished every one but himself, he declared that he was not ill, that he was only dying, for he was finishing his task. The resounding revival of old Peace Conference conflicts brought the Tiger back into the fray, not so much to attack the memory of a great soldier as to justify himself as a fighter for France.

In the evening of the eleventh anniversary of Armistice Day, four old soldiers of France, two of them on crutches, all of them bearing the searing marks of war, came to see the Father of Victory. Clemenceau, in thanking them for their visit, and condoling their sufferings, said: "Perhaps you may be rewarded in Heaven, but of that I am not sure; in any case, don't expect any reward from the world around you. You have to seek that within yourselves; and I am sure that you will find it."

Clemenceau, having proudly declared as a younger man that a man should live as though death never existed, towards the end spoke almost as one who had already passed on, and above all as one who recognised that the gigantic effort of humanity to free itself from war to conquer leisure in which to develop the social profits of peace, had been unavailing. Clemenceau said to these four warriors: "Your visit honours and saddens me at the same time. Together we tried to achieve a great thing. We have not succeeded. That is not your fault; you did everything that could be asked of you."

Clemenceau's worst enemy cannot rob him of his share of such a tribute.

Himself a fighter, even in the tranquillity of the grave where he sleeps with his father, he will for long remain a subject of controversy. He lived too vividly, too aggressively not to have left behind him numbers of embittered foes. In his own country it may be that time will place him in true perspective. The world at large may feel that the Peace forged by his hammer at Versailles was a sword rather than a shield; that it was tempered by old hatreds rather than by new ideals; but nowhere can it be denied that Clemenceau in winning the war gave to those new ideals their first possibility of life.

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